

SHARING THE BURDEN OF PASTORAL MINISTRY: A MODEL
FOR EFFECTIVE ELDERSHIP AT SALEM FRENCH
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH.

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ABSTRACT

SHARING THE BURDEN OF PASTORAL MINISTRY: A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE ELDERSHIP AT SALEM FRENCH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH.

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The objective of the project was to develop a model to train and increase the effectiveness of local church elders at Salem French Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. Pastors are offered left alone to carry the burden of pastoral ministry even when local church elders are elected to assist them in their work. Local church elders lack of adequate training often creates frustration in the leadership body and results in ineffective ministry. A mixed research methodology was used to collect and analyze.

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My gratitude goes first to God who has been my refuge and strength, provider of all good and excellent gifts. Heartfelt appreciation also goes to my family, my loving wife Dr. Farah Jean Cesar, and my sons Samuel Johnson Cesar and Nathaniel Augustus Cesar. I am eternally grateful to my mentors the Reverend Dr. Keith D. D. Lawrence and the Reverend Dr. Kenneth Edward Marcus. I will forever cherish the support and insightful counsels of the Reverend Dr. Donnell J. Moore and the vivid conversations Dr. Felicia Laboy inspired.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this academic project to my mom and dad, Tercia J. Cesar and Maurice H. Cesar. They toiled to give me opportunities they did not have and push me to attain heights they have not attained. I have known the affections of women, the appreciation of parishioners, but none equals the love of my mother. I thank God for you mom, and will always love you.

INTRODUCTION

Socrates' ethical philosophy hinges on knowledge. He maintained that people behave badly out of ignorance.¹ It is true that a correlation exists between right action and knowledge; in fact, it is virtually impossible to do right without prior knowledge of the right. And even when one would do the right, he or she would not know that the right is being done. It is then dubious that right knowing unequivocally results in right doing. Knowledge, however, sets the agenda and provides a standard by which right action is judged and evaluated.

The Haitian community in Jacksonville, Florida is growing. The city attracts Haitian from South Florida and the northern states who come looking for employment and a more affordable place to live. The Haitian Adventists join the church but find it difficult to stay and grow due to serious leadership gloss. The church's growth is slowed by a lack of adequate leadership. The church has a longstanding history of ineffective or inconsistent pastoral leadership. Part of the reason is the fact that the Coordinator of Haitian Ministries at the conference level is generally given oversight of the church. Due to the scope of his work, that is, having the oversight of forty-seven (47) churches from Jacksonville to Miami, the pastor was unable to shepherd the church as a resident pastor would. This *état de chose* creates a leadership vacuum that the local church elders were unable to fill due to a lack of adequate training.

¹ Dennis P. Hollinger, *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 37.

The objective of this project is to equip and train local church elders to share pastoral leadership and assume the role of the pastor effectively when absent. The goal is to create a training model, a required knowledge base, as it were, for local church elders to enhance their performance and evaluate their effectiveness. In training church elders to carry their role responsibly and effectively, the church will benefit from good leadership as evidenced in spiritually nourishing services, coordinated in-reach and outreach programs, good fiscal practices, and oversight of the maintenance of the church facility.

Chapter one discusses the writer's developmental contexts and spiritual awakening. Pertinent events in his life were examined in light of his current pastoral assignment. The lack of pastoral care and spiritual guidance from local church elders created the vacuum in his life from which this project emerges. God uses these deficiencies to meet the need of a growing congregation and heals the writer.

Chapter two examines current theoretical contributions scholars have made in the field of shared leadership and its applications and outcomes in different organizational contexts. Elements and principles of participative management are used to create the teaching model arrive at the results expected.

Chapter three lays the biblical, historical, and theological foundations of this doctoral project. The institution of local church elders has its roots in the Bible, history, and theology. A meticulous visit of these foundational sites shed great lights on the ancient nature of the institution and its evolution over time. The exploration permitted to situate our location on the historical map of the institution of local church elders and chart the course for its future direction.

Chapter four presents a lay out of the research methodology and discusses boundaries, limitations, and scope of the project. It sets the stage, as it were, for the chapter to follow and discusses issues of instrumentation, intervention, and the project calendar.

Chapter five discusses the implementation of the project, data collection and analysis. Questionnaires, posttest results, and a focus group questions were used to examine the effectiveness of the interventions. This triangulation method served to buttress the findings and determined the validity of the results obtained.

Chapter six is about the writer's reflections, summation, and conclusion of the project. A retrospective look is cast on the doctoral journey, its challenges, and motivation. The benefits of the project and its continual application in the writer's ministry are discussed. Also, potential for the project's use in different Seventh-day Adventist congregations are examined.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Mental health professionals used the term therapeutic use of self to refer to personal human qualities and experiences therapists bring to bear in therapeutic encounters.¹ They draw from past challenges, success and/or failures to help patients understand the universal nature of the human experience and hope that, through their openness and transparency, patients see rays of hope and come to develop coping mechanisms to overcome life's challenges. In Jungian psychotherapy, this practice is akin to the concept of wounded healer for a good half of every treatment that probes at all deeply consists of the doctors' examining themselves... It is their own hurt that gives them the power to heal.² Hence, that which is a priori unseemly experiences in the life of the helper or minister may well be intersecting points of synergy between their own narrative and their ministering context.

It is only in retrospect that one can see clearer, never plainly, the hand of God masterfully weaving one's life tapestry. Then, what was once perceived to be haphazard or merely coincidental becomes undoubtedly providential. Søren Kierkegaard captures that reality in part when he said life must be lived forward, but can only be understood

¹ Dawn Freshwater, *Therapeutic Nursing: Improving patient Care Through Self-Awareness and Reflection* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 1997), 22.

² Edward Smith, *The Person of The Therapist* (Jefferson, NC: 2003), 8.

backward.³ God ordained my birth in modest conditions, a disintegrated family, an eventual affluent upbringing, and a near homeless experience in America to instill in his manservant the values of compassion and professional approachability, which would be both essential and instrumental to ministerial success.

The earliest recollections of personal compassion date back to 1991 on the Adventist University campus in Haiti where a group of poor teenagers stood outside the cafeteria interns eat and begged for leftovers. The dismissing attitude of the cafeteria staff and other interns toward these underprivileged kids lacked humanity and compassion, an appalling display in a context so abnormally accustomed to deprivation. A group of friends, including me, made it a duty to collect leftovers from the tables and, at times, share our own meal with them. That practice would later bring a humanitarian focus to my ministerial practice and opened the eyes to see past the apparently seamed accouterment that often mask physical and emotional needs in a ministering context obsessed with masks.

Few Haitians embraced their humble pasts and the challenges inherent to the immigration experience. God allowed me to experience financial crises at the onset of my immigration experience to equip me for the work of ministry. The financial shock of life in America could not have been more unsettling. Dad lost his home and business was bad, a situation that left us essentially worse off here in America than we were in Haiti. Things got so bad that we regularly took food from the church pantries and were forced to rent a room from a church member. In one occasion, mom left the room she rented just in time before the pastor visited with us lest he saw the conditions wherein we were living. These

³ Søren Kierkegaard Quotes, accessed March , 15, 2015, https://www.goodreads.com/author /.../6172.S_ren_Kierkegaard.

experiences, however painful, help keep the family grounded in the reality that most Haitians faced and are facing, especially in the early years of the immigration process, and provide invaluable insights to the conditions wherein some church members live. They help understand in part why some members refused pastoral visitation and would rather keep everyone at bay: they do not want people to know their business, including the pastor.

There is little doubt that God is at work in the unfortunate experiences in the lives of the men and women He calls so that they, in turn, can be witnesses to His goodness. The pastor's narrative becomes a witness to God's power and ability to deliver to the uttermost and bring about wholeness. On account of the personal life experiences shared from the pulpit, the membership's perspective of the pastor and the pastoral office change drastically. People feel less embarrassed by the condition wherein they live and no longer think that the pastor is too lofty to visit their humble dwellings. They welcome the man of God and request that he calls on them the blessings of God. In that context, the pastor is not an alien being, but a brother who comes to them where they are and share their bread with joy and love.

In most contexts, including mine, church members take heed to the pastor's counsels. Even when they disagree, most of them do so respectfully and they are very careful not to offend the man of God. Some older ministers insist that new and less experienced ministers keep a professional distance; that they refrain from eating, talking too much, or playing with church members. While that practice may have worked in Haiti, the average Seventh-day Adventist in America needs a pastor who is more than a sermonizer. The need for emotionally and socially involved ministers is great and only

those who embrace a holistic philosophy of pastoral ministry can be truly relevant and effective.

Transparency is of the essence and makes ministerial sense as it glorifies God for His blessings and faithfulness. It also encourages people to be open to share their own stories, which pave the way for effective and relevant pastoral ministry. The membership understands that pastoral visitation is not essentially a social event, but a spiritual practice wherein the pastor visits people in their own context where spiritual, social, and emotional needs are assessed and interventions individualized to help them grow and realize their God-given potential.

I blessed the Lord for humble beginnings; they, perhaps more than anything else, render the Christian leader humble and approachable. Life challenges generally soften the heart and make believers sensible the needs of others. Pretense and self-aggrandizement can be dangerous, as they tend to put people out of touch with their own humanity and make them unapproachable, by implication ineffective. God uses deprivation to teach us humility. Moses sums it up in the book of Deuteronomy 8:3-4.

And he[God] humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with the manna, which thou hadst not known, and which thy fathers knew not; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by everything that goeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live.

Seminary professors often do a good job at teaching students the doctrines of their respective faith traditions, church polity, the mechanics of proper exegesis and hermeneutics; however, few Adventist seminaries make it a duty to instill in their students the importance to care for the physical needs of their parishioners. Social work school made up for what seminary training lacked and social work training is nothing short of God's ministerial curriculum for his manservant.

The dissatisfaction with a ministerial degree came in the aftermath of the college's board of trustees decision to fire a brilliant New Testament scholar mainly because he was encouraging his students to think outside of the box and questioned some of the doctrines that have been too long taken for granted, some doctrinal pillars that needed examining. The school's administration felt that he was causing students to go astray and decided to terminate his employment. When questioned on the main reasons for the professor's dismissal, the president of the college at the time replied that the school was a confessional institution—students are taught to espouse the doctrines of the church, not to question them. The intellectual indignation felt was colossal because no setting is more fitting to discuss matters without running the risk of losing one's livelihood than the academia. To be told that the school was a confessional institution, that we accept things as presented to us and should not question them was not only nonchalant, but also intellectually assaultive.

The quest for a ministry-like profession ended abruptly in an ethic course taken with nursing and social work students. Respective professors discussed the code of ethics of the professions and the love for social work and nursing values were instantaneous. The decision to pursue a social work degree was made and the Lord's guided the school search to Stony Brook University where an application was later sent and, in addition to admission to the masters' degree program at the school of social welfare, a fellowship was secured. A full scholarship was obtained along with a sum of ten thousand dollars per annum for the duration of the program to help defray the cost of living and other school related expenses.

Crisis intervention, case management, community activism, and advocacy skills are some of the skills learned as a social work student, a case manager and the supervisor for mental health case management services at the largest adult home in the state of New York. To some people it may appear coincidental, but the social work education was part of an intersecting point of synergy. Knowledge of social services such as social security benefit, SSI, SSD, Medicaid, Medicare, mental health case management services, and ACT Team services, among others, were used at some point in ministry to help parishioners navigate the complicated web of social services. What was once thought, as an additional professional option became a powerful tool for ministry.

Social workers are also trained to work with a wide array of personal and social problems. These include anger problems, compulsive behavior, domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, alcohol and smoking problem. Those sets of skills and competencies are used to help congregants and referrals are made when indicated to help congregants and a community in need of advanced treatment. Open and closed-groups are run periodically to help address some of the most visceral issues parishioners deal with, including money management, stress management, and anger management to help them function to the best of their ability in the community while they are preparing themselves for the Lord's return.

God was also at work in my appointment to my first district almost seven years ago. I had just come to America and quickly got involved in evangelistic work. In the Haitian context, everyone, except the pastor, works as a volunteer; in fact, expecting nothing for services rendered to the church is the norm. Some evangelists held weeks of prayer and revival and received no financial compensation in return. This practice gave

us a sense of selflessness where personal interests were virtually non-existent, save the gratification of seeing souls being baptized and the honor of being used by God. That is the spirit that motivated evangelistic work then and continues to motivate us now. The guest-evangelist who would later become the executive secretary and president of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventist admired the zeal and selflessness of the young man and God would use him eight years later to extend a call to work for the conference as a pastor.

Numerous candidates vie for the position of a retiring pastor. It is customary that the Haitian Advisory meets and discussed the gifts of potential workers and makes recommendations to the executive administrators who would take it to the executive board for final approval. A senior pastor allowed me to work with him while pursuing a graduate degree in social work and gave me one thousand dollars per month as a stipend. The Lord blessed the ministry of his manservant whom the senior pastor warmly recommended. Although the coordinator of Franco-Haitian Ministries at the time did not want to recommend me, the executive secretary insisted that they consider me, and they eventually did. God, indeed, works in mysterious ways.

Another interesting point of synergy that is worth mentioning is my to the Executive Boards of the Greater New York and the Atlantic Union Conferences. There is no doubt in the immediate ministerial context and beyond that the Lord has blessed me with the gift of preaching; in fact, the gift of preaching has been redemptive in the early stages of my ministry. The challenges have been primarily administrative, a gift that the man of God lacks to some extent. To further equip His servant, the Lord allowed me to be elected to the executive boards of the Conference and the Union, the highest decision-

making and administrative bodies of the church in the Northeastern region of the United States to give me exposure to business meetings practices at the highest level possible. Some people believe that God is tactical, everything He does will somehow fit in the puzzle of redemption He swore to reconstruct. I could not agree more. As a result of participating in multiple business meetings, board meetings at the local church are run more efficiently and I have become a better pastor-administrator.

The role of women in my life cannot be emphasized enough. Dad left Haiti when I was only three and a half years old never to resurface as the main educator, disciplinarian, and role model. He sent remittances regularly as circumstances permitted to help sustain the family left back home; but in terms of emotional investment and influence on the manner of men we have become, his input has been minimal. It follows that mom shoulder the responsibilities that dad should have assumed had he been present, including that of a provider and a disciplinarian; brief she became for all intents and purposes the head of the household. Her *modus operandi*, leadership style, and sense of sacrifice influence to this day both my philosophy of parenting and ministry.

Women, in general, tend to be cooperative as oppose to competitive and mom was no different. She involved her children early in the decision-making process, which facilitated compliance and helped developed in us teamwork qualities that are essential in pastoral ministry. Hence, in a country where the rights of women are not as respected as they are in America and where men usually dismiss their wife, growing up with mom as head of household prepared us to function collaboratively at work as a team player and to accept the leadership of women wherever God intends them to be in his vineyard.

There is an interesting point of synergy between my context and upbringing. I lead with my immediate colleagues, not lord over them. The non-confrontational approach used in pastoral practice has been a blessing and helped diffuse and de-escalate situations that might have been otherwise nefarious for the church's administration and spiritual wellbeing. When dealing with antagonistic deacons and church members, the Lord always help us find a way to see past the malice and meanness that are marshaled against us to genuinely seek an amiable solution. Similarly, major church projects and plans are discussed with the pastoral college in good faith. The brethren are challenged to look at proposals with objectivity and pastoral insights. When an item is presented for discussion in board meeting, it is generally passed because the pastoral leadership of the church previously discussed it thoroughly.

God has called me for a special work, one that unfolds progressively. He engineered both fortunate and unfortunate life experiences, work experience and academic preparation to ensure that, like Paul, His manservant goes to the matriculation process and follows the curriculum divinely prepared in order to be ready to be used in context where he can be effective. My troublesome upbringing, personal challenges in America, lack of pastoral or church elders' guidance, all have contributed to the problem this doctoral project hopes to help address: Sharing the burden: Training elders for effective pastoral ministry.

Adopting a case management approach to pastoral ministry will help revitalize the lost art of pastoral presence and pastoral care, not so much in the clinical sense as much as in the rustic sense. Themes and concepts will be borrowed from major case management theories and adapted to the pastoral context. If one pastor becomes more

effective, if one elder is more equipped, if one soul is more satisfied, and if God is glorified, then this work would have worth all the toil and challenges.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Old Testament

The book of Numbers belongs to the five-volume corpus ordinarily called the Pentateuch. In early Jewish settings, the corpus was called hattorah, torah, or sepher hattorah because of its nature and content. This designation was later expanded to include titles such as torath Mosheh, sepher Mosheh, sepher torath Mosheh to emphasize Mosaic authorship, a nomenclature that was again revised to account for the real author of the text, namely God. Passages like Ezra 7:10, Nehemiah 8:18, 2 Chronicles 17:9 include appellations law of Yahweh, law of God, book of the law of Yahweh to make it undeniably clear that while Moses was the channel God used to birth the text, the Pentateuch remains Yahweh's handiwork.¹

The title Numbers is a rendering of the Latin term Numeri and the Greek word Arithmoi, from which derive the English word arithmetic, which means counting.² In Hebrew literature the nomenclature varies. Early Hebrew naming of the book comes from the first word of the text wayedabber, Yahweh spoke, a title that was changed to bemidbar, in the wilderness, and later Homeš happequddîm, "the fifth of the mustering or

¹ Anthony Maas, "Pentateuch," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911, accessed December 12, 2013, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11646c.htm>.

² Maas, "Pentateuch," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

census.³ For Gray, these descriptive titles rest essentially on content and emphatic issues biblical scholars privileged, which reflects their exegetical preference. Some Bible expositors put emphasis on God's revelation, others on the physical setting, and yet others on the census events. As for Gray, the Hebrew title in the bemidbar seems more appropriate as the wilderness is the setting wherein most of the narrative the text contains emerged.⁴

Numbers picks up where Exodus leaves off, completes the Sinai material, and places the people at the doorstep of the Promised Land. More than any text in the Mosaic corpus, Numbers gives an account of the peoples' experience and wandering in the wilderness, one that is filled with instances of rebellion and eventuated in delayed promises and deferred hope.⁵ Israel's refusal to take possession of the land owing to the report the ten spies rendered at Kadesh-Barnea marked a decisive turn in the wilderness journey. Their reaction and ensuing action resulted in God's rejection of that generation and their eventual death in the wilderness. Of the generation of people who left Egypt, only Caleb and Joshua survived the wilderness wanderings. They are both remnants of the old generation and transitional connectors for the new generation of Israelites who will take possession of the Land, something their fathers and forefathers failed to do some forty years earlier.

The wilderness is the setting wherein the book emerged. Israel is called to review God's blessings as evidenced in the censuses, recurrent divine interventions to meet their

³ R. D. Cole, "Numbers," *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, vol. 3B (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000).

⁴ Cole, "Numbers," *The New American Commentary*, 4.

⁵ C. M. Woods & J. Rogers, *Leviticus-Numbers* (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 2006).

needs, and God's determination to keep his promises. The unfaithfulness and rebellion cycles of the old generation are addressed. The younger generation that anticipates entrance in the land that God promised on Oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to bequeath to their descendants, whom they represent, must know the minutiae of the covenant and be warned of the consequences that will befall them if they breach the covenant. It is no accident that the book is sandwiched between the Levitical legislation and Deuteronomy. Cultic rituals and obedience to the Law are *sine qua non* for happy living in Canaan. The second generation is faced with a question that determines its future: Will they be faithful and stay in Canaan or rebellious as the first generation and face deportation and exile?⁶

The Enlightenment saw a period of considerable progress in arts and literature—it was called the age of reason. Secular thinkers and philosophers like Voltaire, Spinoza, Locke, Bayle, and Newton, amongst others, push against traditional and religious values and call for rational analysis as tools for social change and knowledge building. That paradigm shift influenced the way scholars considered and studied sacred texts, including the Bible. The biblical witness was no longer seen as an otherworldly text, but a text like any others that must be subjected to robust analysis and textual criticism to ascertain its historicity and authenticity. Hence, matters that once were settled with respect to the redaction of the biblical text and revelation were unearthed and reexamined in light of modern standards of textual analysis. On that account Hamilton writes,

For most of the first eighteen centuries of the Christian era, pentateuchal authorship was considered pretty much a settled matter. Most people accepted the view that the Pentateuch was composed by Moses, the great lawgiver and deliver of Israel from Egyptian bondage.⁷

⁶ Cole, *The New American Commentary*.

⁷ Victor, P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, Chs. 1-17, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990).

Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is maintained among conservative Judeo-Christian scholars. Historical critical scholars, however, argue that the text contain significant discrepancies that cannot go unaddressed. While some critical scholars do not completely reject Moses authorship, they maintain that the text was tampered with as evidenced by chronological inaccuracies, traces of later authorship than the time of Moses, and editor-compiler additions due to contextual concerns.⁸ For some critics, the mention of the second Passover in Numbers 9:1 in the first month of the second year juxtaposed to the first census event in the second month of the same year represent a chronological blunder. Some people argue, “If Moses wrote the Pentateuch as it is now constructed, all the particulars would have been fitted together in a consecutive order and connection in accordance with the actual sequence of events.”⁹

Critical scholars argue that Numbers, like other books in the five-volume corpus, is a compilation that was edited to clarify archaisms and obscure matters, a process that occurred over four to five hundred years.¹⁰ They contend that the text contains passages that reflect a time when the Children were no longer in the wilderness and post-exilic materials, which pose a space-time dilemma. For modern critical scholars, JE source, said to have been compiled during the ninth to eighth centuries B.C., set forth a systematic presentation of the pre-settlement period described in Deuteronomy 1-4, retrojecting

⁸ W. Thomas, *Introductory Essay on the Authenticity and Authorship of the Book of Numbers* (New York, NY: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1910).

⁹ Thomas, *Introductory Essay on the Authenticity*.

¹⁰ Earl S. Kalland, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1992).

materials, and events of the settlement and early kingdom periods into that formative era of Israelite history.¹¹

Conservative scholars maintained Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, in general, and Numbers in particular.¹² They argue that the post-exilic theory is not convincing as the content of the text with particular reference to priestly legislation, laws and institutions reflect an earlier period.¹³ This position is based on at least four reasons that are substantiated by internal and inter-textual evidence. First, Moses' writing activities are recorded in the text itself and mentioned in other biblical books (Nm 33:1, 2; Jn 5:45-47, Acts 26:22; Rom 10:5). Wayedabber, a key linguistic construct in the text, is no perfunctory detail but a theological statement and a historical assertion that speak to the origination of the text.¹⁴ Second, Moses privileged upbringing in Egypt leaves no doubt on his ability to document history as it happened and to transmit received revelations from God. Third, the unity of text in the context of the Pentateuch favors the single-authorship theory. Fourth, the historical data the book contains are in harmony with the historical period wherein the text was written.¹⁵

The push from critical academics influenced the way some conservative scholars look at the Torah. Some posit that though the text contains editorial material, Moses supervised the process and wrote a significant portion of the text.¹⁶ It was not unusual

¹¹ Cole, *The New American Commentary*, 31.

¹² Cole, *The New American Commentary*, 31.

¹³ Cole, *The New American Commentary*, 31.

¹⁴ Cole, *The New American Commentary*, 31.

¹⁵ Cole, *The New American Commentary*, 31.

¹⁶ Cole, *The New American Commentary*, 31.

that authors employed scribes to assist in writing important and lengthy texts; yet internal and inter-textual evidence consistent with the Tota Scriptura approach, that is belief in and acceptance of all scripture, must prevail as one seeks to know the revealed will of God in scriptures.

Critical historical scholars maintain that the book of Numbers is a late composition and can be historically located in the 7th and even 8th century. Richard Clifford posit that Numbers, just like the book of Deuteronomy, “was given shape in the face of the Neo-Assyrian threat to Israel’s existence in the late eight century, probably under King Hezekiah (722-698 BCE).”¹⁷ This claim raise important concerns as internal evidence seem to place the text in a much earlier historical period. We read in Numbers 36:13, “These are the commands and regulations the Lord gave through Moses to the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.” This passage makes it undeniably clear that the wilderness pilgrimage had come to an end at which time the text was written. If it is historically true that the exodus event occurred somewhere between 1446-1444 BCE, a date that is supported by 1 King 6:1 which indicates that Solomon began the construction of the Lord’s temple in the 4th year of his reign, that is some 480 years after the Exodus, an earlier date of redaction must be maintained.¹⁸

There is no consensus in the scholarly literature on the structure of the book of Numbers. Part of the reason is the abundance or overabundance of literary forms and topics that list the book. On that account Denis Olson writes, “The reader will find stories and laws, travel itineraries and census lists, lists of personal names and lists of instruction

¹⁷ Richard Clifford, *Old Testament Message 4* (Wilmington, DE), 6.

¹⁸ John Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1983).

for worship, reports of military battles and accounts of legal disputes.”¹⁹ Unlike the other books of the Mosaic corpus, there are no clear narrative moves, which led some scholars to refer to the book as “the junk room of the Bible.”²⁰ For Olson, the book’s structure is to be found in its transitional nature: “The transition from the old generation of the wilderness to the new generation of hope and promise on the edge of the promised land forms the primary structure and theme for the book of Numbers.” This structure, he maintains, is punctuated by the two censuses that essentially divide the book in two halves, respectively chapters 1-25, which deal with the old generation of Jews that came out of Egypt and died in the wilderness and chapters 26-36 that focus on the new generation of Jews who will inherit the Promised Land.²¹

Timothy Ashley delineates the book’s structure somewhat differently. For him, the book revolves around a structure of orientation (1:1-10: 10), disorientation (10:11-22:1), new orientation (22: 1-36:13), and travel sections (10: 11-12:16; 20: 1-22:1).²² Olson also acknowledges Ashley’s outline of the book although he sees it in terms of boundaries. “The book of numbers wrestles throughout its pages with struggles to discern boundaries and polarities of life and death.... boundaries between old and new generations, boundaries between God’s holy presence and a sinful Israel, boundaries

¹⁹ Dennis T. Olson, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1996), 2.

²⁰ Olson, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary*, 2.

²¹ Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*:

²² Timothy R. Ashley, *The book of Numbers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1993), 2.

between leaders and followers, boundaries between God's judgment and God's forgiveness."²³

Walvoord and Zuck argue that Numbers was meant to be an instruction manual for Israel after the Sinai encampment, a manual that addresses three important aspects of the people's journey: "How the nation was to order itself in its journeying, how the priests and Levites were to function in the condition of mobility which lay ahead, and how they were to prepare themselves for the conquest of Canaan and their settled lives there."²⁴ The remote purpose of the Numbers is paramount as the book places before us generations of believers' patterns of rebellions that must be avoided lest one incurs divine punishment. These things, Paul said, "happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us (1Cor 10: 11). Phillip King gives the following summary of the book of Numbers:

God dwells among his people, who are the object of his steadfast love. Man is bound to obey the Lord; disobedience will be encountered by divine punishment. But God will never totally abandon his people. Numbers is a striking testimonial to the Lord's providential care of the Israelites. Despite their constant grumbling, he guided them through the desert, he sustained them with nourishment in the most barren wastes, and he led them to victory in the face of hostile forces. Despite all their recalcitrance, the Lord was able to bring them to the Promised Land. Numbers give assurance also that the Lord listens to the prayers of men; oftentimes Moses interceded with the Lord on behalf of Israel.²⁵

Numbers 11: 15, 16 sits in a context of rebellion and belongs to the first half of the book, the portion of the text Olson refers to as the old generation (chs. 1-26).²⁶ The

²³ Olson, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary*, 7.

²⁴ Kenneth Baker, *Inside the Bible: An Introduction to Each Book of the Bible* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press 1998), 215.

²⁵ Phillip King, *Old Testament Reading Guide*, vol. 3, ed. William G, Heidt (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1960-1968), 5.

²⁶ Walvoord, and Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

days of servitudes in Egypt were greatly missed, not so much for the tireless toil and oppression the Hebrews endured, but for elements of comfort and Egyptian cuisine that were much a part of their sojourning there. The Jews had grown accustomed to a regular diet, one that was rich in meat and spices and fat. These delicacies were lacking in the wilderness. Hence soon after their departure from Sinai, they began to complain against Moses and against God as they reminisced with fondness on the days of old and demanded that Moses give them meat to eat. In Numbers 11 they are heard saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish that we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up. There is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes."

The demand for a different menu is not so much a problem when human nature is taken into consideration. While change is generally frightening, in matters of cuisine and fine eateries people welcome it. It is not clear how long they have been eating the manna of the Lord, but it is sensible to surmise that they have eaten it long enough, morning and evening, to the point that they had grown tired of it. The problem seems to have arisen in the way they went about voicing their concerns and the element of solution they proposed. The text says, they stood at the door of Moses' tent, they weep in their families, they demand that Moses give them meat to eat, and they wish they had stayed in Egypt. The language the author used heightened their dissatisfaction with Moses and with God. In essence, they were asking Moses to give them back what they once had in Egypt and they blamed him for the dietary distress they experienced in the wilderness. Their behavior suggests they were more concerned for food than they were content with their newfound and God-given freedom.

This attitude is a slap in the face, especially when placed in the context of God's benevolent treatment of his people and His activities on their behalf. It was a blatant rejection of God's provision and deliverance as well as a provocation that resulted from their yearning for Egyptian cuisine, and their desire to appease their boring palates. Moses' reaction is telling. He wants to resign for the burden is too heavy for one man to carry. In fact, he uses motherhood language like nursing, carrying in one's bosom, conception, begetting, words and expressions that reveal the exhaustion of a tired and overworked mother who is mortified at her inability to care for her children as she would desire. God's answer to Moses is twofold: He would give the people meat to eat and would supply Moses with abled leadership to help him bear the burden.

The Hebrew word for elder, *zaqen*, comes from a primitive root or a corollary *zaqan*, which means beard or bearded one. It can mean both older men and leaders.²⁷ The word is first used in Genesis 50:7 when Joseph gathered the elders of his house and of Egypt in order to bring the body of his father to be buried in Canaan. The concept reappears in Exodus 3:16, "go, and gather together the elders (*Zaqen*) of Israel. These references are clear indications that the elders play a leadership role in the community and serve the function of gatekeepers or go to persons, as it were, to maintain some sort of structure in the absence of complex structures of established government that would later characterized them as a people in subsequent historical periods. The concept elder or *zaqen* is akin to notions of age, experience, or wisdom. The fact that Moses is instructed to chose seventy elders from the elders of Israel lends credence to the idea that elders may not necessarily be an actual leader or in active leadership role, but they were credible, respected counselors and helpers to the leadership.

²⁷ Woods & Rogers, *Leviticus-Numbers*, 241-242.

It is important to observe that these men were chosen to assist Moses in various leadership roles and to help him bear the burden of the people. They were to bear the burden of the people with him not for him or in his stead. Two important concepts are worth discussing at this point: the burden of leadership and shared leadership. Leading the people of God is burdensome and challenging. Moses' work involved spiritual, political, and judicial leadership. Some scholars suggest that the people numbered in the millions and given the multifaceted nature of the work, no one man could do the work alone. The passage at hand stresses that Moses' exhaustion resulted from the continuous demands the people placed on him in a geographically hostile environment context. God's response to Moses' plea reveals that God is well able to satisfy the needs of His people, a reality that God would later prove by giving them meat to eat for one month. God's response with subordinate leaders also reveals God's philosophy of organizational leadership: it is to be a shared, not a one-person effort.

There must be no confusion on who is ultimately responsible before God for the leadership of the people and of the elders. The help God provides Moses in the persons of the elders does not relieve him of his duties and his responsibility to God and to the people. Woods is right when he says the term *zagen* indicates subordinate public role.²⁸ Moses' leadership is in no way lessened by able leadership; if anything, he is strengthened as he is now freed to attend to more weighty matters and leave the lesser ones in the care of the elders. On the superiority of his position, Woods writes: "Far from lessening Moses' gifts or authority, the Spirit was to be imparted to the elders in such a way as to

²⁸ Phillip King, *Old Testament Reading Guide*, vol. 3, ed. William G. Heidt (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1960-1968), 5.

clearly show their subordination to Moses.”²⁹ God would take some of the Spirit God imparted to Moses and give to the elders.

The ensuing impartation of the Spirit indicates that receiving the Holy Spirit or ordination is a pre-requisite for service. The text leaves no doubt on the status of those men—they were active leaders “elders of the people and officers over them” (verse 16). They were being called to fulfill a higher work and serve on a larger echelon. Impartation of the Holy Spirit became an essential requirement prior to engaging in the work of sharing the burden of the people with Moses.

The idea of ultimate or primer leadership is further established in God’s treatment of Aaron and Miriam in the following chapter. God both reprimanded them and passed judgment on Miriam for speaking ill of Moses. The ensuing punishment was public and evident for all to see—she was made leprous and stayed out of the camp for seven days. Had it not been for the intercession of Moses, she might have remained a leper till she died. God heard Moses plea and restored her health. This incident, I believe, was meant to be a lesson to the elders recently appointed so they learn that though they are privileged with assisting the man of God, God wants them to know in no uncertain terms who is in charge and to keep in mind that their job is not to make the man of God’s work more burdensome than it already is, but to help him carry it.

Moses’ reaction to Joshua’s concerns at the hearing that Eldad and Medad received the Spirit and were prophesying is telling. The author of the book takes no time to explain why these men were not present at the Tent of Meeting with the seventy-eight elders. The text simply says that they, too, received the Spirit and prophesied. We have one event, two men involved, and two responses. The response of Moses and Joshua to

²⁹ Woods & Rogers, *Leviticus-Numbers*, 91.

this even typifies the way established leadership generally responds to God's call of leaders. This happening suggests that God's call reaches farther than humans can see. Our reaction to God's activity should be one of respect and openness to receive whatever blessing God choose to channel through others, whether we see them as part of the group or not. Eldad and Medad are no threats to one's ministry and diminish in no way one's influence. In fact, God raises these leaders to help us carry the burden of ministry and such people should be embraced, accepted, and encouraged to fulfill their ministry as God wills. The question now is: Is their ministry going to be encouraged or stifled?

New Testament

The need for abled leadership is also discussed in the New Testament. The Epistle of Paul to Titus, in most Greek manuscripts Pros Titon, belongs to the Pauline corpus ordinarily called pastoral letters or Pastorals. Paul Anton is credited for the appellation Pastorals, an expression he uses to group 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus by reason of their similitude.³⁰ These address issues that confronted Timothy and Titus in their pastoral contexts and offer spiritual counsels to help them effectively address challenges that are germane to pastoral ministry.³¹ Issues of church polity and policies are discussed in Titus with particular emphasis on effective and responsible church leadership. The church was never meant to be a one-man or a one-woman show, but a unit wherein spiritual leadership is encouraged and developed to meet the spiritual needs of believers and equip them for ministry. This passage highlights the need to enlist qualified church leaders to

³⁰ Frances Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³¹ Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters*.

help carry the burden of pastoral ministry—it is a concerted effort, not a solo performance.

Internal evidence suggests that home churches were established on Crete at the time the Letter was written (Ti 1). Crete was an island of many cities, “Crete of the hundred cities,” Homer called it.³² Peacefully nestled in the Mediterranean Sea South of Greece, it had become a fertile ground for evangelical work, an *etat-de-chose* that was perhaps catalyzed by the exposure of Cretan Jews to the Pentecost event.³³ Some biblical historians maintain that Crete had a substantial Jewish population, a situation that did not often help the cause of the gospel. On the one hand, some gentiles, while converted, clung to their former lives and turned the message of grace into a license to sin; on the other hand, the Christian Jews mixed Jewish customs with the gospel message and insisted that Christians of pagan origins respect and practice Judaic rituals.³⁴ Their *modus operandi* diluted the potency of the gospel and caused internal rifts in the church. The continued emergence of false teachers and their proselytizing thrusts accentuated the problem. In those days, Christian congregations were infants with primitive organizational structure; proper organization, leadership, and strong teaching were paramount to ensure the viability and the stability of those local churches.³⁵ That was the backdrop against which the canvass of the Epistle of Paul to Titus was carefully painted, the soil from which it emerged.

³² Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters*.

³³ Lea, & Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*.

³⁴ King, *Old Testament Reading Guide*, 5.

³⁵ K. Larson, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, vol. 9 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 342.

The authorship and date of redaction of the Epistle of Paul to Titus are dubious. Most scholars, critical and conservative alike, agree that the authorship of Titus cannot be easily ascertained. Historical critical scholars like Harnack, Schleiermacher, and Harrison maintain that Paul's missionary work on Crete is problematic as the evidence for such activities are not discussed in the Lucan-Acts account, an omission that is by no means incidental.³⁶ They argue there is no record of Paul's activity on church planting on Crete and, even though Paul might have briefly passed through Crete (Acts 27: 7-9), it is not clear that he had the opportunity to establish churches.³⁷ For Alastair Campbell, the case against Pauline authorship of the Epistle of Titus as well as 1 & 2 Timothy rests on a four-legged stool, namely stylistic, theological, historical, and ecclesiastical.³⁸

Critical scholars posit that the language of the Pastorals differs from the Pauline corpus both in style and in vocabulary. On that account, Harrison writes:

The vocabulary of the Pastorals consists of some 902 words, of which fifty-four are proper names. Of the remaining 848, 306 or over 36 percent, are not to be found in any one of the ten Paulines. One hundred and seventy-five, the so-called 'Pastoral *Hapax Legomena* appear in no other New Testament writing outside the Pastorals. Of these, 1 Tim. has ninety-six, that is 15.2 per page, 2 Tim. 60 or 12.9 per page, and Titus 43 or 16. 1 per page.³⁹

The language of the pastorals is, indeed, different from the generally accepted letters of Paul and conservative scholars recognize the linguistic argument is a genuine objection to Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. There are words that are characteristic of

³⁶ Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary: The Holy Bible with Exegetical and Expository Comment* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978), 356.

³⁷ Nichols, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible*, 356.

³⁸ Alastair Campbell, *The Elders* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Y & Y Clark, 2004).

³⁹ P. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1921).

Pauline writings that are missing in the Pastorals; approximately thirty-five words found in the Pastorals are not found anywhere else in the Pauline corpus. They contend, however, that Luke served as Paul's amanuensis and helped write the pastorals, a hypothesis that is essentially based on Luke's appointment to assist Paul in his missionary voyages (2 Cor 8:10).⁴⁰ Ben Witherington insists: "The voice is the voice of Paul, but the hand is the hand of Luke."⁴¹ Moule argument is consistent with Witherington and he, too, hypothesizes that Luke penned the Pastorals, an activity that occurred at Paul's behest and during Paul's lifetime.⁴² Although uncertain, these hypotheses seem plausible since the words that are uncharacteristic of Paul were first century words and were used by Greek writers before A.D. 50, sometime earlier than the time the Pastorals were supposedly written.⁴³ It is, then, quite possible that Luke might have assisted Paul in writing the Letters to Titus and Timothy, which bear Luke's own vocabulary and linguistic style.

The theology of the pastorals hinges on concepts like household of God (oikos Theou) sound teaching (didaskalia & didaskolos), piety (eusebeia), and pastoral ethics. The household of God distinction, though dominant in the Pastorals, does not present a substantive evidence to dismiss Paul's authorship. The concept is due in part to the intent and content of the pastorals, namely the ordering of evolving house-churches. Von Campenhausen posits that the Pastorals reflect the male oriented and dominated social

⁴⁰ George W Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 48–51.

⁴¹ Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, 60.

⁴² Moule, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*, 58.

⁴³ Lea, Griffin, and Hayne, *The New American Commentary*.

structure of its time, which privilege a pattern of church ordering based on established social paradigms as opposed to the charismata motif that seemed to have defined congregational ministries at Colossae or Ephesus, among other settings.⁴⁴ Conservative scholars saw in Paul's use of household of God a genuine use of contextual language of a church organizational model patterned after a synagogue structure or a household model, social arrangements with which Paul was quite familiar.⁴⁵ On that account Aageson writes,

The household management traditions in the Greco-Roman world have come to be understood as the originating context for the New Testament household codes. Their function in the New Testament turns on either the need to silence criticism of the community by outsiders and hence avoid scandal and attract converts or to order the internal affairs of the community before the advent of more formal ecclesiastical structures.⁴⁶

While it is true that the household structure may have been a replica of social arrangements that was common in first century Christianity, the household of God concept may also have been based on a family-centered theology wherein God is the Father of all believers, which essentially makes us God's family; that, too, has its merits.⁴⁷ In that model, Kostenberger and Wilder argue: "God is viewed as the head (despotes), who appoints an overseer (episcopos) as a house administrator (oikonomos)."⁴⁸ Irrespective of what interpretive framework one uses, the concept

⁴⁴ Wall & Steele, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*.

⁴⁵ King, *Old Testament Reading Guide*, 5.

⁴⁶ James W. Aageson, *Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 13.

⁴⁷ Andreas J. Kostenberger and Terry L. Wilder, *Entrusted With the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles*, (Nashville, TN: B &H Publishing Group, 2010).

⁴⁸ Nichols, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible*, 176.

household of God, for sure, adds something new to ecclesiology, something that cannot be ignored.

The threat false teaching posed to the fledgling congregations was malignant; false teachers must be silenced and believers must be exposed to sound teaching and strong leadership if the church were to survive and persevere in sound doctrine. Some contend that the challenge the church seemingly faced was primarily Gnosticism, a body of teaching that places knowledge of some exoteric truths at a *sine qua non* for salvation. The Gnostics discouraged marriage and encouraged strict dietary practices, not for health-related reasons but as means of salvation.⁴⁹ Opponents of Pauline authorship of the pastorals maintained that Paul's attack of Gnosticism speaks in favor of a later date of redaction and a different author since Gnosticism was common in the second century, long after Paul's death during the reign of Nero.⁵⁰ While it is true that gnostic teachings continued to threaten the church with greater force in the second century, conservative scholars argue that Gnosticism at the time of Paul was embryonic and akin to the earlier form of the heresy found in Colossae. Powell argues that Paul was combatting a sort of proto-gnostic ideology that began to gain prominence in his time.⁵¹ Consequently, one cannot dismiss the Pauline authorship of the pastorals based on his rejection of and teaching against Gnosticism alone.

There are only three occurrences of the Greek word for church, *ekklesia*, in the pastoral letters (1 Tm 3: 5, 15; 5: 16), a term that appears fifty-nine times in the Pauline

⁴⁹ Niswonger, *The New Testament History*.

⁵⁰ Nichols, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible*, 176.

⁵¹ Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2009).

corpus.⁵² Yet, the ecclesiological undertone of the pastorals cannot be overlooked. The ecclesiology of the pastorals is so pronounced that critical scholars see in them a new pattern of church organization that warrants questioning the traditionally accepted Pauline authorship. The ecclesiastical argument against Pauline authorship of the Pastorals is intertwined with the historical argument and opponents of the Pauline authorship advance that the church offices discussed in the pastorals reflect a later form of church organization than those in existence at the time of Paul and consequently could not have been written by him.⁵³ In the book of Acts, they maintain, we have a two-tiered leadership structure consisting of the apostle and deacon whereas the pastorals reference to a three-tiered structure, namely bishops, elders, and other ecclesiastical functions.⁵⁴ Those offices were later developed as the church became institutionalized. The writings of church fathers like Ignatius and Clement reflect that sort of complex church organizational structure, but Acts offers no indices that such complex organizational structure was in existence at the time of Paul.⁵⁵

Some proponents of Pauline authorship of the pastorals admit that the letters reflect some type of organizational structure that is lacking in other Pauline letters. That development, however, was indicative of a progressive, living Pauline tradition rooted in an organic and contextual setting wherein Paul lived.⁵⁶ Also, the concepts of bishops and

⁵² Wall & Steele, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*.

⁵³ Wall & Steele, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*.

⁵⁴ Andreas J. Kostenberger and Terry L. Wilder, *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010).

⁵⁵ Kostenberger and Wilder, *Entrusted with the Gospel*.

⁵⁶ Georg Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

elders are used interchangeably in the Pastorals; hence, common interpretations of the words bishops and elders in hierarchical terms reflect an interpretive bias predicated on poor exegesis and a myopic analytical grill.⁵⁷ The focus is not on the office per se, whether it be bishop, elders, teachers, doctors, but on the actual role. On that account Wall & Steele maintain that, “The teaching office in the Pastoral Epistles is established more in terms of Paul’s prophetic authority than in terms associated with an office established by a religious institution.”⁵⁸ Hence, the teacher is not an incumbent of a political office as it were, but God’s mouthpiece to teach and defend the gospel.

The historical argument against Pauline authorship of the Pastorals is equally interesting as the linguistic argument. Acts ends abruptly with Paul under house arrest at Rome where he is awaiting to appear before the Emperor.⁵⁹ Acts, a text critical and conservative scholars alike use to reconstruct Paul’s life and ministry, offers limited data on Paul’s missionary activity on Crete. Critical scholars’ quest for Paul’s ministry is somewhat halted where Acts ends and they make no effort to offer to go beyond that which Acts make available to them. They maintain that Paul’s arrest and eventual apparition before the emperor led to his death, one he seemed to expect⁶⁰

Conservative scholars’ response rests on two important hypotheses: the gap in the record and second imprisonments hypotheses. The former refers to the claim that there are aspects of Paul’s biography for which there are no record.⁶¹ The evangelists themselves are selective in their writings and care only to write things they deem

⁵⁷ Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*.

⁵⁸ King, *Old Testament Reading Guide*, 61.

⁵⁹ D. B. Capes, R. Reeves, & E. R. Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press 2007).

⁶¹ Luke Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2000).

essential. On that account John writes, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written” (Jn 21: 25). It is quite logical that Luke’s historical account, as presented in Acts, omitted happenings in the life and the ministry of Paul that he might have considered inconsequential. The gap in the record hypothesis, in turn, necessitates elaborate explanations to situate the pastorals in Paul’s lifetime; hence, the origin of the two Roman imprisonment theory.

The two Roman imprisonments theory essentially posits that Paul was released from the imprisonment episode that concludes the book of Acts, continued his missionary work, and was later rearrested and beheaded.⁶² Evidence for this hypothesis is gleaned, in part, from Philippians wherein Paul expected to be released in a relatively short time as opposed to 2 Timothy which he wrote in the shadow of his imminent death.⁶³ Towner uses the writings of Clement to find support for the aforementioned theory. He writes,

1 Clement 5.7 mentions the tradition of Paul’s travels to the far west. If this means Spain instead of Rome according to the statement of Paul’s westward ambitions (Rom 15:24), then the author presumably implies some sort of knowledge about a release of Paul not mentioned by Luke. The tradition of Paul’s visit to Spain is also mentioned in the Muratorian Canon and the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* 1.1. Later Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.22) also indicates unambiguous knowledge of the tradition of Paul’s release from a first Roman imprisonment, as well as Paul’s eventual death at the hands of Nero when he came to Rome a second time.⁶⁴

There is no consensus on the date of redaction of Titus. As discussed earlier, some argue that it is a second century document as evidenced by a complex church

⁶² Robert H. Gundry, *A Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012).

⁶³ Capes, Reeves, & Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction*.

⁶⁴ Philip H. Towner, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2006).

organizational structure and historical data that seem to point to a later date of composition. The traditional date that is retained for the composition of Titus is 64 through 67 A.D., prior to Paul's death in at the hand of Nero (54-68 A.D.).⁶⁵ This writer privileges the traditional view of Pauline authorship as the arguments critical scholars put forth are inconclusive.

Titus follows the general pattern of epistolary documents of first-century Christianity, including an opening, a body, and a closing. Paul writes a lengthy salutation (1:1-4), discusses the qualifications of Elders after laying the epistolary situation (1:5-9), gives instructions regarding church discipline and false teachers (10-16), discusses household codes (2: 1-10), gives pastoral exhortation (2:15-3:8), and writes the final exhortation, remarks and farewell (3:8-15). Some scholars argue that the epistle as a chiasmic structure; others build on that remark and see an even more complex form of chiasm in Titus 1:5-3:11 called Criss-Cross Chiasmus (an epistolary technique that consists of an announcement of purpose and reverse development).⁶⁶ Irrespective of the different views on the structure of Titus, most New Testament scholars agree that the body of the letter is structured in the following manner: leadership in the churches (1:5-16), household code for various groups (2:1-15), and Christian behavioral standards (3:1-11).⁶⁷

Some authors hide their writing purpose, which requires the reader to sift through the text to unearth the literary thread that runs through the textual fabric. Others reveal

⁶⁵ Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 48–51.

⁶⁶ Kevin Gary Smith, "The Structure of Titus: Criss-cross Chiasmus as Structural Marker," accessed January 16, 2014, <http://www.sats.edu.za/userfiles/TheStructureofTitus.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Lea and Griffin *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*.

their writing purpose from the outset. Paul did just that in his letter to Titus: “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you” (Ti 1:5). As a young minister faced with great challenges in his ministerial context, Titus needs the experienced counsels and encouragement of an elder brother to navigate the turbulent sea of opposition that is germane to pastoral ministry. Paul’s letter to Titus does just that and more—Titus is to squash the false teachers’ influence and teach the sound doctrine boldly; he is told to enlist able and morally upright leaders in the fight, and finally make plan to join Paul at Nicopolis where he planned to pass the winter.⁶⁸

The text emerges out of a doctrinal fuel, as it were, between Titus and false teachers who were perturbing the saints. Internal evidence suggests that Paul had spent some time on the Island of Crete together with Titus, whom he left to attend to unfinished business. Titus was a companion of Paul and being a gentile himself, a Greek to be exact, hence uncircumcised, accompanied Paul to Jerusalem to settle the debate on gentiles’ circumcision (Gal 2: 3; Acts 15:1-2). Titus served as Paul’s emissary or mailman to the Corinthian church according to 2 Corinthians 8:16-19, and in the text under consideration we meet him on Crete where he is told to “set in order what remains and appoint elders” (Ti 1: 5).

Paul wastes no time to address the matter at hand. After the formal greetings, he launches right into the purpose of his writing. The Greek verb set in order (*επιδιορτωσι* —*epidiorthōsēi*) is a first aorist middle subjunctive, which indicates potential action, something that is yet to be fulfilled or accomplished. It is preceded by the present active participle of the verb *leipo*, to lack (*λείποντα* – *leiponta*) as to emphasize the incomplete

⁶⁸ Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*.

nature of the work on Crete. There must be no ambiguity on the state of the Cretan churches. Things are not as they should be and something must be done to address the problem.

Paul did not mince words in his letter to Titus; there is a job to be done and it is to be done well. The verb *ἐπιδιορθοῶ* (*epidiorthoō*), which means to set straight, has an orthopedic connotation. It was used in medical textbooks with reference to set broken bones or straightening crooked limbs.⁶⁹ The word picture reveals more than is initially stated. Paul set before us fractured, broken, and bedridden congregations that need abled intervention to recover. As a doctor of the Church, Titus is to take his scalpel, bistoury, sub acromion retractor, and murphy bone skid and started operating on the church. He must not be timid about the work; he must not hire a team of anesthesiologists. He is to rebuke false teachers, teach sound doctrines, model godly living, and appoint elders in every city to do the same. The work will be painful and time-consuming, but it must and will be done for the church must not only survive, it must thrive.

Some commentators treat Paul's injunction as one command and read the text in the following manner: that you may set in order what remains, namely, appoint elders in every city.⁷⁰ That interpretation treats the word *kai* (translated and) as an epexegetis rather than a conjunction of coordination that joins two different clauses, ideas, or things. Banker argues that the use of *kai* in the verse is copulative, not epexegetic, and the two

⁶⁹ M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in The New Testament*, vol. 4 (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons), 332-333.

⁷⁰ William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles: New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books House, 1957).

clauses indicate two different things.⁷¹ The later interpretation is favored for at least two reasons: first, there is no indication that Paul started the work of appointing elder before he left Crete; it follows that that task does not fall under the umbrella of setting in order the remaining things, whatever those things might have been. Second, the appointment of elders constitutes a miniscule portion of the letter, which is discussed in four verses whereas Paul spent his time addressing other matters in the remainder of the letter.⁷²

Judaizers might have been already opposing the gospel during Paul's stay on Crete and caused internal rift in the Cretan churches; also, Cretans might have had some cultural and lifestyle changes to make to adapt to godly living. After all, they were known for untrustworthiness and riotous living. The interrelatedness of the two clauses, set things in order and ordain elders, is closely weaved together. Part of settings things in order apparently involve ordaining elders and the elders, in turn, will help in setting things in order, whether through modeling godly behavior, teaching sound doctrines, or rebuking false teachers.

The work of appointing elders is of utmost importance. The word for appointment is καταστησις — *katastēsēis*; again, *the verb* is a first aorist middle subjunctive, which indicates potential action, something that is yet to be fulfilled or accomplished, not yet done. This *etat-de-chose* both explain in part the reason false teachers are wrecking havoc in the churches; there was no leadership and the developmental stage of the churches was yet in its infancy. Had they been in existence for a long time and was firmly established, they would have had some sort of leadership to meet the opposition and bring the church

⁷¹ John Banker, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Titus* (Dallas, TX: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1987).

⁷² Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*.

to its state of equilibrium. The method of appointing elders is not clearly indicated. Some commentators posit that the local congregation may have had a say in the matter while others maintain that, given the full episcopal authority given to Titus, he might have done it alone.⁷³ In any event, clear instructions are given concerning the qualification of elders.

The Greek word for elders, πρεσβυτερους, (*presbuterous*) refers to an aged person, a senior member of the community or congregation. As its Hebrew counterpart *Zaqan*, the concept evokes notions of age, experience, and wisdom. In Titus 1, *presbuterous* is used interchangeably with *episkopos*, or overseer. There was no hierarchical distinction between the two concepts, not at the time Paul wrote the epistle to Titus. Elder was the title and oversight the function. On that Fenton John Anthony Hort wrote in David Cox's *Priesthood in a New Millennium: Toward an understanding of Anglican Presbyterate in the Twenty-First Century*,

Elders, (a term he used consistently for *presbuteroi*) were no new phenomenon but rather a Christian version of the ordinary Jewish elders who governed the synagogue. These elders exerted oversight without holding a title of oversight: their episcopate was a function, not an office."⁷⁴

In the New Testament context, elders were simply aged men who provided leadership to the church and the term was likely carried over from the synagogue and played a key role in first century church organizational structure.⁷⁵

Effective leadership, for Paul, involves more than a function; it involves right being. Paul's presentation of qualified eldership equally emphasized knowledge and ethos. In order words, pastoral ethics is an equally if not an even more potent form of teaching as

⁷³ J. H. Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Titus and Philemon*, 2nd ed. (Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008), 21-25.

⁷⁴ R. David Cox. *Priesthood in a New Millennium: Toward an understanding of Anglican Presbyterate in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2004), 20.

⁷⁵ Lea & Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 275-278.

the teaching activity itself. On the surface level, it would appear that Paul sandwiches unfitting characteristic for church eldership between two sets of positives traits. But a close look at the structure of the text seems to suggest that the leadership characteristics he set forth in verse 6 is further developed in verses 7-9, wherein he states explicitly what he meant in positive and negative terms. He said what blamelessness is not; then he says what blamelessness is.

The Greek word used for blameless is *ανεγκλητος* (*anegklētos*). Paul uses this word elsewhere to describe his ultimate vision God has for the church; the word denotes ethical transformation (Col 1:22; Phil 1:10).⁷⁶ The term means: in a condition of first class.⁷⁷ On the issue of blamelessness or beyond reproach Allison writes,

This cannot be construed to mean that a person's background is unimportant in consideration for fitness for the office, but it does imply that no former misdeed (including, it would seem, persecution of the church by the writer of the letter to Timothy!) necessarily disqualifies a man from serving in this capacity.⁷⁸

Nonetheless, the elder's profession of faith in Jesus must produce works of righteousness. The idea that Cretans are liars, lazy gluttons may be true of Cretans, but not Christians, let alone Christian leaders. They are to be role models, open books for all to see; they must not only be teachers of the word, but doers of the word. What they teach they must first practice to honor the gospel and have the moral authority needed to be effective. The expression Do what I say, not as I do is anathema to Paul's idea of ministry. What the elder preaches and what the elder does cannot be dissociated.

⁷⁶ James W. Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry According to Paul: A Biblical Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2006).

⁷⁷ Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry According to Paul*.

⁷⁸ Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 213.

Paul's idea of blamelessness or fitness for ministry involves more than the elder; it involves his children, his wife; brief, everything that is under his immediate authority.⁷⁹ Paul emphasizes and reemphasizes the importance for the elder to rule his household well, which Barclay calls the premier training ground for the eldership.⁸⁰ He who does not lead his household well is unfit for ministry. Effective leadership in the domestic sphere is further evidenced in the manner the elder's family members respond to the gospel. Church leaders later established Paul's idea on the matter: "Bishops, elders and deacons shall not be ordained to office before they have made all in their own households members of the Catholic Church."⁸¹ Paul and the church fathers hold elders responsible for the overall wellbeing of his household.

Elders are responsible for what happens in their homes and how their children turn out. A proper understanding of this passage, however, while insisting that elders should stay in their leadership post, must also take into consideration the reality of a long gone patriarchal era and the domestic challenges elders face in a secular context. They must make every imaginable effort to balance their church and their home lives to meet the spiritual needs of their household, which is their first church. "All the church service in the world will not atone for neglect of a man's own family."⁸² However, when the parental and marital duties would have been fulfilled and one's children would have

⁷⁹ The language of the text is male oriented and is left unchanged to maintain the integrity of the text. The Holy Spirit is not respected of person and bestows spiritual gifts on men and women alike, who, too, have and continue to play important roles in God's church and His plan of salvation.

⁸⁰ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, & Philemon* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1960).

⁸¹ Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry According to Paul*, 234.

⁸² Thompson, *Pastoral Ministry According to Paul*, 235.

come of age, an elder's wife and children are responsible for their own behavior and that should not impede an elder's work for God.

In helping to carry the burden of pastoral ministry, elders must strive to not become burden themselves through riotous living and unscrupulous practices. The work of pastoral ministry is intense and often involves defending the congregation and protecting the flock against ravenous people whose goal is to scatter the sheep and wreak havoc in the church. As elders stand ready to accomplish the task of shepherding the flock, they themselves must strive to be found blameless before God through pious living, a condition that also is to be evident in the comportment of their immediate family. Paul's admonition to Titus still echoes loudly and remains the standard for pastors and elders alike.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

There have been renewed efforts among scholars in the last decades to study the topic of church leadership throughout the history of the Christian church, in general, and the first five centuries, in particular. These have been seminal in reconstructing the office of eldership and enlivening the conversation on issues of church polity. An understanding of the history of eldership in the Christian tradition helps place in perspective the office of elders and its evolution over time. That understanding will result in an appreciation for and a deeper comprehension of the office, its relevance then and its importance now for contextual pastoral ministries. The historical foundation will show that although the pastor has gained ascendancy over church elders, first century Christianity knew no such distinction. We will trace the origins of the Christian elder, its nature and distinguishing features, to do a comparative analysis of the same in the first and second centuries Christianity.

The teaching of Jesus and his messianic claims set in motion a series of undertakings eventuating in his death by crucifixion and the subsequent birth of a new religion: Christianity. On the birth of Christianity John Crossan writes:

Jesus' followers thought that he was the Messiah, but then he was executed and buried. Later his tomb was found empty and he appeared to his former companions as risen from the dead. Christianity was born on Easter Sunday... It

is the resurrection of a dead man that explains the power of Christianity's birth and growth, spread and triumph, across the Roman Empire.¹

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the subsequent conversion of 3,000 people to the Way began a period of expansion that progressed as the Lord continued to be present with his people through the Holy Spirit. Subsequent persecutions and missionary thrusts forced the Christians out of some cities and established towns; and as they went, they carried with them the message of the risen Lord. These, initially, were Jews.²

Bible historians recognized the intricate relationship between Judaism and Christianity and most critical and modern scholars agree that Jesus' immediate and first followers were Palestinian Jews who followed the Torah and worshipped in the Temple.³ There are clear historical supports for Jewish presence in the incipient church, at least prior to Paul's missionary activities. "The earliest community of his followers also consisted of practicing Jews, and was at first considered merely a branch of Judaism."⁴ The distinction between Judaism and Christianity was not clear at the time of Emperor Claudius, a historical fact James Adair support in his book when he says, "Claudius was unable to make the distinction between Jews and Christian...he commanded to expel the Jews from Rome because they were continually making disturbances at the instigation of

¹ John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened In The Years Immediately After The Execution Of Jesus* (New York, NY: HarperCollings Publishers, 1998), viii.

² M. Don Schorn, *The Legacy of the Elder Gods* (Huntsville, AR: Zark Mountain Publishing, 2009).

³ Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, & Philemon*, 32.

⁴ Delbert Burkett, *An Introduction to The New Testament and the Origins Of Christianity* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Chrestus.”⁵ Christians eventually broke away from the synagogue as irreconcilable differences between the two religious systems became more pronounced, which eventuated in Christianity becoming a full-fledge religion.

Origins of the Christian Elder

The first leaders of the church were the apostles.⁶ Jesus commissioned them to preach the gospel and promised to send them the Holy Spirit to help them do the work. At that stage of the church development, the offices of deacons, elders, and prophets had not yet emerged. As it is often the case, organizational structure arose to meet a need. Just as the diaconate arose to address the concerns of Jerusalem Christians without partiality, the eldership was sprout to meet the Christian church’s needs for leadership.

Structure is important in all institutions and for an emergent religion it is vital. The breaking away from Judaism did not mean separation from anything Jewish. Relics and traditional elements of Judaism were woven into the tapestry of the Christian church as the new religion struggled with issues of identity and endeavored to organize itself for the work of ministry. Christians no longer met in synagogues; they met in houses, what would later become house-churches, and these new arrangements would have their own organizational structure, including deacons and elders who will play specific roles.

There is no consensus amongst New Testament scholars and church historians on the origins of church elders. Some maintain that the office or title descends from the synagogue model since the early church consisted primarily of Christian Jews who were

⁵ James Adair, *Christianity: The Journal of Buddhist Ethics* (Online Books, Ltd. 2007), 169.

⁶ Harry R. Boer, *A Short History of the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967).

familiar with the synagogue model.⁷ Merkel, however, maintain that there is not enough historical evidence to support this assumption and he insists that one looks beyond the synagogue model to trace the origin of the Christian elder, which, he maintains can be traced to at least four possible sources, namely the Old Testament, the Sanhedrin, the synagogue and the culture.⁸

The appellation elder was attributed to Christian leaders on the account of its use in Old Testament times. There are biblical evidence that supports this view and depicts elders as leaders of Israel. In fact, the Greek word for elder, *presbuteros*, is rendered similarly in the Septuagint and there are areas where the role of the Christian elder overlaps with that of the Old Testament elder. Nevertheless, it is dubious that the Old Testament model of eldership set the stage for the eldership pattern that emerged in the New Testament church structure.⁹ A. E. Harvey supports Merkel's point and wrote, "There are no institution in the Old Testament times which could be regarded as the forerunner. . . of the Christian prebysenate."¹⁰

The term is also said to have been barrowed from the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin appeared at a later time in Israel's history whereas the elders reflect a socio-cultural phenomenon that dated back to slavery days. Merkel posits that the Sanhedrin began to take shape sometime after the Persian era and was composed primarily of the high priest,

⁷ Benjamin L. Merkel, *40 Questions About Elders and Deacons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008).

⁸ Larson, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*.

⁹ Larson, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 87.

¹⁰ Merkel, A. E. Harvey in Merkel.

the lawyers, and the elders who belong to neither group.¹¹ The primary role of the Sanhedrin was judicial and that role is inconsistent with the role the elders play in the Christian church. This distinction is important and invalidates the claim that New Testament elders emerged from the Sanhedrin model as these served primarily as church leaders and not a judicial council.¹²

Another claim is that the Christian elder originated from the culture. This view equates the Christian elder with the Jewish elder in that both were perceived as respected community leaders and carried no official duties. Eldership was not the title of an office in the Old Testament, the Sanhedrin, or the synagogue and was essentially a cultural nomenclature. Campbell agrees with Merkel and writes: “The elders is a collective term for the leadership of the tribe, or the ruling class under the monarchy and thereafter, but it was never the title of an office to which an individual might be appointed.”¹³

The belief that the institution of elders in the Christian church comes from the synagogue organizational structure is widely held primarily because of the inextricable ties that link Christianity to Judaism. Burtchaell posits, “It is impossible to understand primitive Christian worship unless in continuity with Jewish worship. So much of what we might consider to be distinctively and creatively Christian was in fact an outgrowth of its Jewish antecedents.”¹⁴ There are substantial differences between the organizational structure of the synagogue and that of the incipient church; for instance, the synagogue had senior elders, Levitical priests, and notables, and these offices have no counterpart in

¹¹ Larson, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 87.

¹² Larson, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, 87.

¹³ Campbell, *The Elders*, 26.

¹⁴ James T. Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

the early church tradition. There are similarities between the synagogue and the primitive church that cannot be overlooked, although the nomenclature may be different across the two traditions. For instance, the gathering place is called church as opposed to synagogue, the church uses the word deacon in lieu of assistant, the church had episkopos in place of ruler or president of the synagogue, and these titles are essentially semantic differences.¹⁵

It is difficult to reconstruct the origin of the Christian elder in the primitive church. No one hypothesis is historically substantive enough to lay claim to the origin of the Christian elder. It is certain, however, that the term is rooted in a Jewish context and may have emerged out of a mixture of Jewish contexts and social realities that were both relevant and meaningful to first century Christians.

First Century Christian Elders

The first century Christian elders were spiritually mature men. This feature of first century eldership is well established in the pastorals and may have been a reflection of the socio-cultural arrangement of first century Christianity and beyond. It does not, however, negate nor diminish women's contribution to the church. In fact, there are scriptural instances where women played important roles in the life of the early church and Paul's missionary activities. "They were among those who opened their homes to the first house-churches, both in Greece and Asia Minor, something for which we have the word of both Paul and Acts [Luke], and evidence from Jerusalem and Joppa also."¹⁶ It is

¹⁵ Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church*, 87.

¹⁶ Campbell, *The Elders*, 26.

unconvincing that spiritual gifts are partial and are given along gender categories of maleness and femaleness. While the scriptural witness for male eldership in first century Christianity cannot be denied, male eldership in the Bible is descriptive, not normative.

First century Christian elders were not professional clergymen who met a denomination's ministerial requirements and followed a process for ordination. They did not go to seminaries and followed a ministerial curriculum. They were men filled with the Holy Spirit whose ministries were sanctioned by the Holy Spirit as the Spirit saw fit to equip them to do the work of ministry. Viola maintains: First-century elders were simply spiritually mature men, exemplary Christians who superintended the affairs of the church ... They were not hired pulpiteers, professional clergy, or ecclesiastical chairmen. They were simply older brothers carrying out real functions."¹⁷ This *etat-de-chose* is not a case against professional clergy or against the centrality of learning and scholarship in pulpit ministry and church leadership. The importance of cultured eldership is obvious. Nevertheless, the quintessential qualification is spiritual, not academic.

First century Christian elders were head of households. This characteristic of first century elders is both a description and a qualifier. As a position, the concept head of household speaks of their status in the community as credible leaders and effective managers of their own houses. These were responsible and respectable men who through good ethics and morality earned the respect of their peers and their community. That, in and of itself, became a qualifier or the litmus test for church leadership. Boice writes,

¹⁷ Frank Viola, *Reimagining Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1984).

“Elders must be proper leaders and managers of their own households if they are to be considered as possible leaders and managers of the household of God.”¹⁸

The apostles appointed first century elders. These came from their local congregation and were given authority to oversee the church. The procedural methods used to appoint elders remains elusive. On that, Hoffmann writes: “It was not material how they were nominated, but that the right men should fill the office; men living in conformity with the will of Christ, and this was secured by the Spirit which dwelt in the church.”¹⁹ While the nominating process for first century Christian is unclear, there are ample information on their work and responsibilities.

The responsibilities of first century elders were primarily teaching and managing the affairs of the church. Some scholars maintain that there were two types of elders, teaching elders and ruling elders. Teaching elders’ tasks consisted primarily of preaching and teaching whereas ruling elders gave attention to the administrative aspect of ministry. Others maintain that the distinction is a false dichotomy scholars bent on categorization posit to argue for something that has no basis in scripture and history. The debate over the existence of teaching and ruling elders is unsettled with proponents of each view arguing their position. Cowan writes:

The inevitable conclusion is that there is no warrant for a distinction between the office of elder in the New Testament. Neither is the terminology which distinguishes teaching and ruling elders a good way of describing what the New Testament teachers with regard to the internal organization of the eldership. All

¹⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith: A Comprehensive and Readable Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 639.

¹⁹ Christoph Hoffmann, *Christianity in the First Century: Or, The New Birth of the Social Life of Man through the Rising of Christianity*, 1853 E-book, accessed February 3, 2014, Googlebooks.com 158.

elders are overseers and pastor-teachers. All elders must have the gifts of leadership and teaching.”²⁰

On the task assigned to Christian Elders, Viola adds: Their chief task was threefold: to model servant-hood in the church; to encourage believers to do works of service; and to nurture younger believers and help the congregation grow spiritually.²¹ These elders work diligently and studied the word to protect those entrusted to their care and ward off false teachers. Through modeling Christian service and living ethical and moral lives, they encouraged others to be faithful stewards of the sacred gift of salvation that God graciously gave them. In that, they bore a striking resemblance with their Jewish counterparts. Alastair writes,

They filled that place in the Church which the Elders did among the Jewish people, not indeed as priests or teachers, but as guardians of law and order, appointed to maintain in its integrity, in all the relations of life, the Divine law, the authority of which was acknowledged by every member; to guard against strife; in a word, they were the leading representatives of the Christian society.²²

Plural eldership is perhaps the most noticeable distinction in the office of elders in first century Christianity. Most New Testament scholars and church historians agree that first century elders were equals and constituted one body that provided leadership and addressed the spiritual needs of the church. Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians offers historical support for the concept of plural leadership in first century and the early part of the second century. He puts himself on the same footing as the elders with whom he

²⁰ Steven B. Cowan, *Who Runs the Church? Four Views on Church Government* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 216.

²¹ Viola, *Reimagining Church*.

²² Campbell, *The Elders*, 157.

labored.²³ Selby maintained that Polycarp in his letter addressed different groups, namely wives, husbands, and even deacons, which suggests that elders and deacons played a role in the church leadership. He addressed the elders as one unit, not a presiding elder because the church had none.²⁴

John Chrysostom used Philippians 1:1 to make a case for a single bishop in a sermon he preached in Constantinople towards the end of 4th century. He argued that Paul is addressing a plurality of elders, not a plurality of bishops and since the words episkopos and presbuteros were used interchangeably, an accurate reading of the text should be: fellow elders, not fellow bishops.²⁵ Paul, he maintained, was not making a distinction between two church offices, the diaconate, and the office of elders; hence, the word diakonos is a hendiadys that qualifies the elders and the proper meaning is fellow-elders who serve.

Selby offers a robust rebuttal on grammatical, historical, and literal grounds. He posits that had Paul meant to intimate that overseers should be serving (*fellow-elders who serve*), he would have use the participial form of the verb to serve which would have been unambiguous. The idea that the word kai is exegetical and the expression episkopois kai diaknois is a hendiadys is not grammatically convincing. Biblical inter-textual evidence for the offices of elders and deacons in text like 1 Timothy 3:1-10 suggests that Paul knew that these offices existed in local congregations and he addressed elders as fellow workers.²⁶

²³ Campbell, *The Elders*, 157.

²⁴ Campbell, *The Elders*, 104.

²⁵ Campbell, *The Elders*, 104.

²⁶ Campbell, *The Elders*, 103.

Second Century Christian Elders

The office of elders evolved rapidly from being a charismatic group of equals in the first century and the early part of the second century to becoming a structured and ordered office; and by the end of the century it had become an established office with one elder having ascendancy over the group. Guy mentions that the age of mono-episcopacy incrementally became the new order of things in the middle of the second century and had become virtually universal towards the end of the same.²⁷ Concepts like *presbuteros* and *episkopos* were no longer used interchangeably; the bishop became *primus inter pares* with respect to congregants and other leaders.²⁸

Ignatius of Antioch was instrumental in the thrust toward mono-episcopacy and is often credited for its rise and expansion in the early church. In his letters to different congregations, Ignatius made a distinction between *presbyteroi* or a plurality of elders leading the church and one singular *episkopos*. Elliot maintains, "In this pattern, certain persons from among the *presbyteroi* were chosen as *primi inter pares*, first among equals, to preside over all other *presbyteroi* ad *diakonoi*, and for them the title *episkopos* was reserved."²⁹ In his stratified ecclesial structure, Ignatius set the bishop at the pinnacle of the leadership pyramid with elders as subordinate to the bishops and deacons as subordinate to the bishop and elders.³⁰

²⁷ Laurie Guy, *Introducing early Christianity: A Topical Survey of Its Life, Beliefs & Practices* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

²⁸ Campbell, *The Elders*.

²⁹ Elliott, 554.

³⁰ Elliott, 110.

The thrust toward a uniform structure gained momentum overtime and the office of the bishop became an essential element of church organization. Elliot quotes Ignatius in his epistle to the Trallians wherein he states without bishops, elders, and deacons no group can be called a church.³¹ The responsibilities that came with the office include maintaining orthodoxy, indoctrinating new believers, disciplining wayward members, addressing rising heresies, and supervising local elders—these tasks define the bishopric as an office of oversight and administration.³²

Historical evidence pertinent to church organization in the latter part of the second century is scant. Justin is the only Christian writer to have written about church organization at that time and he uses the term president of the brethren rather than episkopos. Grant argues that this semantic change occurred to protect the bishop from Roman authorities' hostility. Nevertheless, the offices of elders and bishops reflected the change that was characteristics of the first half of the second century. Grant writes,

He [Justin] tells us that at the Eucharist a lector read from the reminiscences of the apostles (which, he says, are called gospels), and bread and wine were brought to the president of the brethren. After he offered a long prayer or sequence of prayers, the deacons distributed the bread and wine to those present and also took them to the absent. The president's functions were both liturgical and charitable, for he was also the community's administrator of funds for orphans, widows, the sick, prisoners, and visitors from abroad.³³

Boer argues that monarchical bishops arose out of the natural tendency for leader to emerge out of the elders' board and became the face and the dominant voice of the

³¹ Elliott, 110.

³² William H. Barckney, *Studying Christianity: The Critical Issues* (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010).

³³ Robert McQueen Grant, *Augustus to Constantine: The Rise and Triumph of Christianity in the Roman World* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Know Press, 2004), 150.

group.³⁴ This assertion intimates a period of informal bishopric where one person would have gained some influence among the group through means, giftedness, and or wisdom and helped swing the pendulum of influence one way or another. Yet, in a spirit-led environment as the early church it is dubious that power motives held sway over genuine concerns for the wellbeing of the congregants.

On the rise of monarchical bishops, Haykin suggests that Ignatius spearhead the mono-episcopacy out of a growing concern to combat heresy. He writes, “The communities to which Ignatius is writing are wrestling with the presence of heresy, and Ignatius is convinced that one orthodox leader in the congregation, the bishop, can secure that congregation’s orthodoxy.”³⁵ Hence, it was imperative to centralize authority to ensure that the doctrine of the church is kept intact.

Other reasons that contributed to the rise of monarchical bishops were persecution and the need to keep the church united. Christianity took root in the heat of persecution and many Christians paid the ultimate price for the faith, martyrdom. Boer argued, persecution forced them to have someone to look up to for counsel and encouragement and that was essential to the survival of the church. That, in turn would solidify the church and give unimaginable powers to bishops, precisely the power of excommunication. Barclay quotes Cyprian of Carthage who later wrote, “Whoever is separated from the church and is joined to an adulteress, is separated from the promises of the church . . . He can no longer have God for his father, who has not the Church for

³⁴ Boer, *A Short History of the Early Church*.

³⁵ Michael A. G. Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 34.

his mother”³⁶ The bishopric both unified the church and harnessed its power into one hand at the local level: the hands of the bishop.

In a relatively short time, the office of elder changed from being a group of spiritual leaders sharing responsibility for the administration of word, sacrament, and order to one emerging figure in the local church gain ascendancy over all, and eventually a clear distinction is drawn between episkopoi and presbuteroi in the local church and beyond. While this evolutionary element in the office of elder was expedient in a doctrinally volatile context, it became the norm overtime, altered in radical ways the office of elder, and finally eventuated in papacy.

A renewed and contextualized argument for effective eldership in the SDA Church context, in general, and Bethesda, in particular, calls for the acknowledgement and the contextualization of biblical and historical elements of eldership to gain fresh perspective of the office and model innovative approaches to meet the needs of congregants and equip them for ministry. This practice may well enhance the effectiveness of elders and increase congregants’ satisfaction as their spiritual needs are met and their place in God’s church and work is affirmed and re-affirmed.

³⁶ Brackney, *Studying Christianity*.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The work church elders do is spiritual as well as communal. They function in ecclesial contexts, yet they live in and affect other contexts because their teachings and lifestyles influence believers' worship and witness in the world. The office of elders is relevant in the context of the church and it has no reason to exist outside of it.

Theological discussions on the topic of church elders, therefore, must be grounded in ecclesiology as well as pneumatology for it is in ecclesiology their work makes sense and in pneumatology their authority derives. The former analyzes the context wherein they operate (the institutional church); the latter examines the impetus behind their work, namely the Holy Spirit who calls and equips men and women to do the work of ministry. This chapter will bring into the discussion the voices of theologians on the nature of the church and the role of the Holy Spirit as giver of gifts as it relates to the ministry of church elders.

The origins of the church cannot be traced with chronological accuracy. Many forces helped shape the church into the form it currently has. Pentecost is, by most accounts, an important milestone in church history. At Pentecost, to repeat Alston, "The church was empowered for action by God's Word and sent into the world by God's

Spirit.¹ From its inception, the church has been a Spirit-driven and Spirit-led enterprise and apart from the Spirit it is irrelevant and loses its true essence, namely koinonia.

For Wallace M. Alston, the concept koinonia describes the very nature of the church. Translated as fellowship or community, koinonia describes the relationship Christians have with God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, one another, the gospel, God's plan to save the gentiles, and the mission of the church.² Alston further writes,

The word points to the fact that those upon whom the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost were drawn into a common life and ministry by a common gospel, rooted and grounded in a common relationship to the triune God. They entered into this koinonia by repentance and baptism to demonstrate that this association was something brand new. The Christian koinonia had continuity with the past. The first Christians claimed the history of Israel as their heritage, but they nevertheless were convinced that Christian community represented a new act of God in accordance with the promise of the risen Christ and in fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

Koinonia, then, is essentially a sharing concept and involves participation in a shared reality. McDonnell captures the essence of koinonia when he writes, "In its basic meaning, the term koinonia/communion denotes a sharing in one reality held in common. Synonyms for koinonia are sharing, participation, community, communion."³ It is participation in and the sharing of Christ's salvation by faith as expressed in the sacraments that both make and maintain the church. The nuances and the interrelatedness of koinonia (communion or communities) and ekklesia (church) are no perfunctory details. Ekklesia precedes koinonia yet it is in koinonia that the church becomes the church. Koinonias, then, can and do exist independently of the church since all koinonias

¹ Wallace M. Alston, *The Church Of The Living God: A Reformed Perspective* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 35.

² Alston, *The Church Of The Living God*, 1.

³ McDonnell, "Communion Ecclesiology and Baptism in the Spirit: Tertullian and the Early Church," *Theological Studies* 49, (1988): 674.

are not churches; however, there can be no church without koinonia. The community or communion that results from the ekklesia is diverse and stand against divisive markers of ethnicity, race, and culture. Paul calls it a mystery hidden from past generations, but revealed to us (Col 1:27). That God would call people from all tribes and races into fellowship with Israel is beyond comprehension. It is precisely that, a community made of people with full access, participation and acceptance that make the church a koinonia.

Kariatlis concurs with Alston's understanding of the church but views it through a Trinitarian prism. For him, the church is made of people God called to be in communion with Jesus through the unifying activity of the Holy Spirit who works assiduously to bring them back to God.⁴ Seen from this angle, the ekklesia, now koinonia, is not a mere human institution made of people with similar worldviews and ideas; it is an extension of God's kingdom on earth, heaven's auxiliary site, as it were, where people come to learn about God and train to help others know God. The otherworldly nature of the church is its distinguishing feature, that which sets it apart from other institution and grounds it both in a spiritual and a worldly context. The church is a reality that is temporal and eternal, human and divine, visible and invisible.

The church, then, is that hybrid context where the divine meets the human and create something that is neither wholly divine nor wholly human but both divine and human. Paul Lehmann calls it the "fellowship-creating reality of Christ presence in the world." This makes sense both theologically, and biblically for in Christ God is present in the world and in Christ the world, that is believers, is present with God in heaven. It follows that there is a reciprocal dialectic that is germane in the church context wherein two existential realms otherwise mutually exclusive, at least in a lapsarian world, meet to

⁴ Philip Kariatlis, *Church as communion: The Gift And Goal of Koinonia*.

create a new reality that welcomes divinity and accepts humanity. Jerome Harmer sees the church as dialectic of interrelated dimension of koinonia; and as such, it is internal and external, horizontal and vertical, sacramental and hierarchical.⁵

Internal and External

The internal aspect of the church in Harmer's dialectic refers to its eschatological reality or its focus on the fulfillment of its purpose, namely to move toward the complete revelation of the kingdom of God. This revelation is incomplete in that the kingdom of God is both present and to come. It is present in that in the church, one may enter temporarily in God's sphere for the church is an extension of God's kingdom on earth. It is to come for God will tabernacle with his people. That which today is beyond human reach and is only accessed via mediated means or symbolisms will soon break into perceptible reality and become a part of God's people new reality.

Unlike other human institutions whose aim and focus are the here and now, the church while existing in the here and now is moving toward the there and beyond. It exists on the perceptible side of reality and is firmly established in the invisible realm, moving toward its eschatological end. This process is dynamic, at least in the temporal sense, for each day brings it closer to its eschatological end, which is the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

Harmer roots the external reality of the church in its existence as a sociological reality in the world, which facilitates fellowship among its members and make koinonia vibrant and stable through the community's confession, disciple, and life. By its very

⁵ Jerome Hamer, *The Church Is A Communion* (New York, NY: Sheed & Ward, 1964).

station, the church exists between the resurrection and the Parousia; it must take into account its *sitz im leben* and that of its parishioners who, too, live in that space-time context. It is, nonetheless, inherently spiritual, or at least should be, as its principles of operation and values stand over against that which is worldly and mundane. Seen in that light, the church is a sociological institution that is anti-social; it exists to negate and reject the values the world flaunts in an in your-face manner and challenges the status quo through word and deed.⁶

The church's presence in the world, that is, its activity in and positions against the world, is by nature attitudinally accepting and doctrinally repulsive. The repulsiveness comes from the radical claims Christ makes of his followers. Far from being restrictive, the church is redemptive and liberative. It redeems the fallen and set sinners free. The freedom God makes available through the church is freedom from the sinful nature, which by definition is enmity with God, and freedom for God. Support for this argument finds theological support in Jones' theology. For him,

The church is that liberative and redemptive community of persons called into being by the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit to witness in word and deed to the living triune God for the benefit of the world to the glory of God.⁷

Words and deeds are the essentials of the witness the church gives to the world. Seen from that angle, witness is not a conceptual reality that is hard to measure and difficult to contain. It finds expressions (words and deeds), which are outward reflections of an inner reality that is radically transformative for the believer's sake and for the sake

⁶ Joe R. Jones, *A Grammar of Christian Faith: Systematic Explorations In Christian Life and Doctrine* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002).

⁷ Jones, *A Grammar of Christian Faith*, 25.

of others. Hence, the church does not only exist for strengthening of its own, it exists for the world.

Horizontal and Vertical

The church also has horizontal and vertical dimensions. In its horizontal level, the church meets the need for fellowship between believers and fosters interrelationships. Other social arrangements meet that need as well. People tend to develop relationships when placed together and working toward concerted goals whether sportive and business, educational or recreational. Humans congregate around concepts, interests, hobbies, ideologies, philosophies, likes, and dislikes. As Harmer insightfully noted, the distinguishing feature of this fellowship is solidarity with one another, a solidarity that is centered on Christ who is the common interest and faith.

The vertical dimension of the church is predicated on the horizontal dimension in that those who are called out of the world to form a new community, a community of faith, have come to participate in God's redemptive work and community. They now participate in and become members of the church, which is the body of Christ. On that, Hamer writes, *koinonia* is founded wholly on Christ and on the Spirit. The horizontal dimension in *koinonia* must be regarded as resulting from a vertical relationship, and can only be explain through this.⁸

The horizontal dimension church members share is predicated on the vertical, a reality that is fully developed and achieved through the power of the Holy Spirit. God as a fellowship and an essentially communal being makes it possible for the church to participate in his fellowship-ness. Fellowship in the body of Christ is modeled on the

⁸ Jones, *A Grammar of Christian Faith*, 208.

mystical communion the Father, Son and Holy Spirit share; it is also an instantiation of divine harmony and fellowship. Instantiation of fellowship-ness is seen in other social arrangements like fraternities, the armed forces, and the family unit, among others; however, it is in the spirit-led church that fellowship-ness finds its fullest expressions as people lay aside divisiveness and accept one another in love and with openness—that is made possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Karkkainen posits that Ignatius of Antioch and Irenaeus's ecclesiological views have set the tone for most major works in ecclesiological history. For Ignatius, it is Christ presence that makes the church, the church. "Wherever Christ's presence is, there is the church."⁹ Irenaeus maintain that it is the Spirit's presence, not Christ's that makes the church what it is. "Wherever the Spirit of God is, there is the church and all grace."¹⁰ The Christ versus Spirit argument rests on a false dichotomy, one that, in fact, does not exist. Just as one cannot separate a person in its constitutive parts, namely body, soul and spirit, and hope to have a normal and functional human being, neither can one separate Christ and the Spirit in ecclesiology. Christ is the body, yet it is the Spirit who enlivens it. Vickers indirectly addresses that reality when he writes, "The church is above all a charismatic community whose life depends entirely on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit."¹¹ Hence without Christ there is no church or body, and without the Spirit

⁹ James A. Kleist, trans. *The Epistle of St. Clement of Rome and St. Ignatius of Antioch* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1946), 8:2.

¹⁰ Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson, trans, *Irenaeus Adversus Haereses* (Grand Rapids, MI: T&T Clark, 1873), 3.24.1

¹¹ Jason E. Vickers, *Minding the Good Ground: A Theology for Church Renewal* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 47.

the body is dead. It takes both Christ and the Spirit to make the church a living spiritual organism.

Sacramental and Hierarchical

Ecclesiology is essentially sacramental; and by sacrament we mean, a visible or sensible sign of something imperceptible and holy.¹² Whereas through baptism one becomes a member of the church-body of Christ, in the Eucharist the church, that is the believer, is united with each other and with Christ through symbolic and spiritual sharing of Christ. Nichols capture that reality when he writes, "By her relationship with Christ, the church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind."¹³ Its function, in this context, is bringing humans in right relationship with God and with one another. This is radical in that it reverses, at least provisionally, the curse that sin brought about, that is, separation with God and with one another and restores relational harmony on the human-divine dimension as well.

In the church context, the believer exists in Christ and Christ lives in the believer; and the church experience, that is the gathering, is not merely outward sign of grace, nor wholly the body of Christ, but both. On this side of reality, one only sees the form; and while the form is not the presence (transubstantiation), it is the presence that gives meaning and power to the form. The form, then, cannot be mixed with the presence, and the presence cannot be isolated from the form, but both operate on two existential realms: visible and invisible.

¹² Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction To Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical, and Global Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press).

¹³ Terrence L. Nichols, *That All May Be One: Hierarchy And Participation In The Church*. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 285.

In sacramental ecclesiology, the church, that is the body of Christ, is inextricably linked with the Eucharist and cannot be separated from it. It is in the Eucharist that the church bears witness to Christ by telling and doing in his remembrance. Karkkainen argues that wherever the Eucharist is, there is the church.¹⁴ In other words, while the church gathers for Eucharist, it is the service of Eucharist itself that makes the church the church. This emphasis on the Eucharist has its merits, but it is somewhat reductive and limits the church, if not equates it, with the Eucharist. Few people would contend that the spiritual significance of the Eucharist and its centrality in the worship service; one must also take into account that not all services involve the Eucharist and one cannot sensibly argue that these gatherings are not churches because the Eucharist was not served. Jesus promised to be present wherever and whenever two or three are gathered in his name. The Eucharist gives physical expression to the spiritually sensible, yet imperceptible, presence of Jesus who through the emblems gives life and vitality to the church.

Luther's ecclesiology rests on a two-legged stool, namely the word and sacrament. He defines the church as "the gathering of all believers, in which the gospel is purely preached and the Holy Sacraments are administered according to the gospel."¹⁵ These two concepts, word and sacraments, encompass the visible-invisible reality of the church. In the church or believers' gathering experience the church exists in the world both as an internal and external reality, a hidden and revealed truth. It is hidden because of its existential faith-nature, that is, hope of things not seen; it is visible or rendered manifest via the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. From

¹⁴ Nichols, *That All May Be One*, 9.

¹⁵ Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*.

this formulation, he juxtaposes sacrament with the notion of *res* (head), thus linking sacrament and hierarchical aspects of the church.

The church is inherently hierarchical and as such it requires men and/or women to hold positions of authority and lead the body of Christ. The concept of authority conjures up frustration and even outward hostility given the subjective experiences of parishioners who might have suffered from leaders' irresponsible behavior. From a biblical standpoint, ecclesial authority is not authority to dominate others but authority to serve. Jesus both modeled and introduced the concept of servant-leadership and enjoined his disciples who would later hold leadership position to seek the wellbeing of those they lead and put the needs of their followers first (Mk 10: 42-45). In that new leadership/hierarchical model, leaders lead for the benefit of others and not their own.

To say that the church is hierarchical is to acknowledge that the Spirit calls, appoints, and equips men and women to do the work of ministry. This presupposes that church leaders, though naturally imperfect, are first and foremost spiritually mature and Holy Spirit-filled men and/or women who through true conversion have come to understand the ministry of Jesus and the role they are called to play in God's plan of redemption. That kind of leadership would be participatory, inviting as opposed to tyrannizing, and repulsive. It would seek the good of the membership and work toward that end for leaders would work from a stewardship model, not an ownership one. Church leadership, then, would be a blessing, not a burden, to the flock. Kenan Osborne notes that when hierarchical leadership is icons of Christ's own service ministry, then institutional and hierarchical leadership merits our acceptance.¹⁶ When that is achieved,

¹⁶ Kenan Osborne, *A Theology for the Third Millennium: A Franciscan Approach* (Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2009).

the church will grow and the membership will be more involved in different ministry as they seek to find their place in the body of Christ, which is the church.

Pneumatology and the Office of Elder

The church is a social-visible institution with a spiritual-invisible dimension. In it, that is, the church, spiritual and human elements intertwine and coexist to help believers carry the mission of the church and invigorate its sacramental life. The Spirit both influences and uses human elements, including human leaders and organizational structures to empower the church for worship and witness. Vickers write, “The church’s structures are themselves gifts of the Spirit to be received and cherished as means of grace through which we come to know and love God.”¹⁷ Through godly organizational practices and leadership people come to know and encounter God in an experiential manner. Some ministries develop to address a need that is specific to a faith community; others are established ministries in all churches and serve as a blueprint, as it were, for church organizational model.

The office of church elders is deeply grounded in pneumatology for it is Christ through the Spirit who gives spiritual gifts and equips. Paul addressed the Ephesians and wanted them to be clear about the gifts of the Spirit and the rationale for them:

He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ (Eph 4: 11-13).

¹⁷ Vickers, *Minding Good Ground*, 4.

Paul uses similar language when instructing the Corinthians on the nature of and purpose for spiritual gifts. He mingles Christology and Pneumatology in the context of ecclesiology to express the importance of all gifts in the body of Christ.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines (1 Cor 12: 7-11).

Kenneth Berding defines the conventional understanding of spiritual gifts as “Abilities, or enablement given by the Holy Spirit to individual believers to help serve others.”¹⁸ He rejects this understanding and argues that this approach focuses on abilities, enablement, and powers rather than emphasizing roles, functions, assignments, and ministries. The distinction between the two lies in that the former makes spiritual gifts abilities-centered, whereas while the later involves some abilities but the focus is ministry. This understanding of spiritual gifts is radical and forces ministers and church leaders at whatever level they serve to rethink their understanding of spiritual gifts and endeavor to keep in the conversation the Spiritual nature of ministry.

The authority of the spiritual elders does not lie in their abilities or lack thereof, but in the anointing that comes with God’s call. A leader may have power without authority. This is an important distinction that is worth discussing. Power comes with the position or the office one holds, but authority comes when the body recognizes and feels the Holy Spirit’s movement in the life and ministry of those the Spirit calls. It follows that he or she who self-appoints is ministering from a place of spiritual deficit for no

¹⁸ Kenneth Berding, *What Are Spiritual Gifts?: Rethinking The Conventional View* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2006), 25.

ministry can be spiritually fulfilling and satisfying unless the minister is ministering under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is God's initiative, not humans.'

From a spiritual standpoint, the office of church elders is of divine origin, not human. Paul minces no word when exhorting the Ephesian elders to care for the flock of God over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers (Acts 20: 28). As the life principle and sustainer of the church, the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to human agents who, through acceptance of their spiritual gifts and faithfulness to their calling, become channels through which flow God's grace and provision for the church. The people who serve the church as elders are not or should not be self-appointed leaders, but men and/or women the Spirit handpicks to help establish the church and equip the saints for ministry.

The office of church elders is grounded in pneumatology for it is the Holy Spirit who gives gifts for the edifying of the church. The Holy Spirit appoints church elders to be a blessing to the body. God is a God of order and part of His ordering the church involves church elders whom He uses to give guidance, leadership, and to be a blessing to the body. The Holy Spirit's appointment of church elders is designed to benefit the whole, not the part so that God's kingdom is built and the church is edified. The movement of the Holy Spirit, to quote Bekhof, "The movement of One to the man, of the pars to the totum."¹⁹ In other words, God uses humans to bless humans.

There is dialectic of reciprocity in the body wherein even the apparently strong live inter-dependently on the apparently weak. Paul uses the analogy of the human body to exemplify the interrelatedness and interdependency one member of the body has on

¹⁹ Hendrikus Bekhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: The Annie Kinkead Warfield Lectures*, 1963-1964 (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967), 63.

another (1Cor 12: 1-20). In Paul's theology, the relationship between church members is organic and functional, not domineering. A right understanding of spiritual gifts and the modus operandi of the church take into account the contributions of each member of the body as vital as the service of those whom the Spirit appoints in places of relatively greater responsibility. The spiritually mature pastor will recognize God's gift of leadership and eldership in other brothers and empower them to make good use of those gifts for the benefit of the church. This recognition creates room for individual and communal growth. Timothy Williams capture that idea when he writes,

When we have a genuine faith and have resolved to serve God, whether we are serving God for the first time or have renewed our service to God or are stepping into a new ministry, there is a spiritual gift within us, like hot coals, that is waiting to be stirred up or fanned into flame. This spiritual gift is stirred up into flame through our activity and perseverance in this gift and the power of the Holy Spirit through us.²⁰

A right pneumatology of spiritual gifts places a high premium on God's call and on service as opposed to power and human's will. Servant-minister, in that spiritual paradigm, will seek to find the place the Spirit assigns them in the body and play that role well because the welfare of the church-body depends on it. Such an understanding values even the least of these for they, too, play a role in maintaining the health of the body. No one servant-minister will attempt to sabotage or render ineffective the ministry of another, as the goal is not self-aggrandizement, but the wellbeing of the church-body.

The office of elders dates back to Old Testament times and become in full view in the primitive church. God never intended the work to be carried by one person and made ample provision for his people through shared leadership to ensure that the work is done

²⁰ Timothy K. Williams. *The Spiritual Gifts (Part 1): The Ascension Gifts of Christ and the Functional Gifts of God: Discovering and Developing your Spiritual Gifts* (Camerillo, CA: Xulon Press, 2003), 401.

an the needs of the people are met. The office of elder is grounded in ecclesiology for it is in the church context the Christian elders carry out his priestly functions alongside the pastor, although part of his work extends to the community. It grounded in pneumatology because it is the Holy Spirit who appoints whom the Spirit pleases to lead the church and oversee its activities and ministries. When church elders fully grasp that the call to service comes from the Holy Spirit and for the benefit of the whole body of Christ, they will be encouraged to take their work for what it really is, namely function, not office. Such an understanding will result in the membership being spiritually fed and pastored as God wills.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Bible is perhaps one of the most influential texts in human history. It fed revolutions and helped shape social constructs that explain human behavior and organizational structures. The concept of shared leadership or participative management first appeared in Exodus 18 where Jethro counseled Moses to enlist capable people to help govern Israel. Jethro's advice was predicated on the fact that shared leadership both alleviates the load of the leader and yields better results. The problem we hope to address is creating a culture of shared leadership to meet the needs of relatively large churches (more than five hundred members) and churches who share pastor through abled church eldership. While this approach will not remove the shepherding responsibilities of pastors, it will free them to attend to weightier matter, prayer, and study. The section discusses the theoretical underpinnings of participative management and presents a perspective on this framework drawn from business, education, and nursing.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Shared leadership is known by many names: participative management, employee empowerment, job involvement, participative decision-making, dispersed leadership, open-book management, or industrial democracy. The basic concept involves any power-

sharing arrangement in which workplace influence is shared among individuals who are otherwise hierarchical equals.¹

The concept of participative management signaled a new era in organizational structure, a stark deviation from traditional leadership models. Historically, leadership conjures up the idea of one powerful individual at the pinnacle of the hierarchical pyramid with subordinates and followers at the bottom. In this model, leadership activities and decision-making powers are centralized and the relationship between the leader and subordinates is a vertical one top-down influence. Organizational scholars in the last decades have argued that leadership is an activity that can be shared among group members considering that subordinates, too, have leadership qualities.² This line of thinking set in motion several scientific studies that sought to examine the concept of team leadership.

Vestiges of team leadership can be traced to Parker Follett's concept of the law of the situation. He argues that one should follow the lead of the person with the most knowledge regarding the situation at hand rather than the lead of the person with the formal authority in a situation.³ Follett's argument emerged at a time when leadership was viewed essentially as unidirectional and vertical. The emphasis was on command and control, and these generally come with the position, nothing else. The roles leaders and subordinates played were sharply separated and unambiguously delineated.

¹ S. Kim, "Participative Management and Job Satisfaction: Lessons for Management Leadership," *Public Administration Review* 2002, 62(2): 231-241.

² Craig L. Peace and Jay A. Conger, *Shared Leadership: Reframing the How's and Whys of Leadership* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003).

³ Peace and Conger, *Shared Leadership*, 6.

Bowers and Seashore's study of insurance offices marked an important milestone in the development of shared leadership.⁴ They coined the term mutual leadership and argue that organizations could benefit from leadership influence processes from employees who do not necessarily hold positions of power. Though the corporate and academic climates were not yet hospitable to their ideas and scholars did not give much attention to the aforementioned studies until the late 1990s, their contributions were later valued as major theoretical contributions from business, psychology, and organizational behavior researchers later influenced leadership scholars' work and generate models of shared leadership processes.⁵

Pearce and Conger maintain that at least six theoretical constructs have helped shape shared leadership into the form it has today. These include human relations and social systems perspective, role differentiation in groups, co-leadership, social exchange theory, and management by objectives and later research on participative goal setting, and emergent leadership theory.

Prior to the 1930s the work environment was strictly impersonal. When leaders and subordinates began to interact on an interpersonal level and began to adopt a social view of the organizational life, the dynamics of the workplace changed drastically.⁶ The human relations and social systems perspectives influence introduced the human element in the social rapport between leaders and subordinates and helped leaders understand the

⁴ Pearce Conger, *Shared Leadership*, 7.

⁵ Pearce Conger, *Shared Leadership*, 7.

⁶ Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of An Industrial Civilization* (New York, NY: Macmillan Press).

correlation between the psychological needs of employees and productivity. Pearce and Conger writes,

It [Human relations and social systems perspectives] opened the possibility that the act of leadership was not simply a unidirectional process of leader to led but, rather a more complex one in which subordinates and their needs might influence the leader as well.⁷

Benne and Sheats are among the pioneer scholars to advance that group members play roles that are equally critical as the group's leader.⁸ For them, leadership is not a unidirectional but a reciprocal process. Having identified two major categories of roles in the work environment, namely task role and socio-emotional roles, they argue that different types of influence come from different group members beyond the appointed leader.

Tasks roles include initiator/contributor, information seeker, opinion seeker, opinion giver, elaborator, coordinator, orienter, evaluator/critic, energizer, procedural technician, and recorder. Socioemotional roles include encourager, harmonizer, compromiser, gatekeeper/expediter, standard setter, group observer/commentator, and follower.⁹

Benne and Sheats' work was an important contribution to the development of shared leadership and added to the debate the notion of multiple leadership roles.¹⁰ Hence role differentiation in groups carry with it not only explanations of human behavior in groups but also answers to how these behavior are in and of themselves leadership roles that, when tapped into and maximized, can yield great dividends.

⁷ Mayo, *The Human Problems of An Industrial Civilization*, 7.

⁸ B. K. Denne & P. Sheats, "Functional Roles of Group Members," *Journal of Social Issues*, 4: 41-49.

⁹ Peace and Conger, *Shared Leadership*, 8.

¹⁰ Peace and Conger, *Shared Leadership*, 8.

Co-leadership, that is, an arrangement wherein two individuals share one leadership position concurrently, is perceived as a special case of and a precursor to shared leadership. Much of the scholarly work on co-leadership is done in group therapy settings where co-leaders have a mentor-protégé relationship, which is generally viewed as a case of vertical leadership considering the power differential element between co-leaders.¹¹ Recent studies in co-leadership examined the relationship between chief executive officers and chief operating officers where the power to make decision is equally shared.¹² One thing is certain is co-leadership is a significant departure from the traditional leadership model and contributed to paving the way for shared leadership

Social exchange theorists like George C. Homans, Peter M. Blau, Richard M. Emerson, L. Festinger used principles of economic exchange theories to explain human interactions in the public square. They argue that human interactions have emotional currency and involve social gain and cost. In the process, one does not only give but also receives. The point of connection between social exchange theory and team leadership lies in that influence is shared in the social exchange leaders have with subordinates.¹³ Influence, then, is not the only the domain of leaders; it also involves subordinates.

The concept of management by objectives (MBO) is perhaps one of the most influential theoretical parents of shared leadership. It removes the focus from individual leader to the work at hand, the objective leaders and subordinates alike hope to achieve. Pearce and Conger write,

¹¹ E. Mintz, "Special Value Of Co-Therapists In Group Psychotherapy" *International journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 13, 1963: 127-132.

¹² D. A. Hennen & W. Bennis, *Co-Leadership: The Power Of Great Partnerships* (New York, NY: Wiley Publishing).

¹³ Pearce and Conger, *Shared Leadership*.

The essence of MBO is that subordinates and superiors actively engage in a process of articulating the objectives toward which subordinates will work and subsequently the ones they will be held accountable for achieving.¹⁴

Another important theoretical base for shared leadership is emergent leadership, a concept Hollander used to refer to the process wherein the members determine and select among themselves the leader. The genius of this model lies in its built-in ability to allow other group members to emerge as the leader as the group goes through a serial emergence of multiple leaders over the life of the team.¹⁵ Leadership, in this model, does not operate from a top-downward direction, but emerges from an upward and operates from a center that fosters in-group leadership and welcomes subordinates leadership's energy.

Other important conceptual frameworks have helped mold the concept of shared leadership into the form it current has. These include connective leadership, shared cognition, empowerment, followship, self-leadership, self-management work teams, vertical dyad linkage theory, substitutes for leadership, expectations states theory and participative decision making.¹⁶ While development of these will not be fully explored, the applications of shared leadership in the disciplines of business, nursing, education, social work.

¹⁴ Peace and Conger, *Shared Leadership*, 9.

¹⁵ E. P. Hollander, *Leadership Dynamics: A Practical Guide to Effective Relationships* (New York, NY: Free press, 1978).

¹⁶ Karen Symms, et al., *Urban Education: A Model for Leadership and Policy* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012).

Participative Leadership in Business

The last decades saw a significant increase in firms and business organizations' use of participative management leadership model. Several major corporations like Ford, Xerox, Motorola have implemented participative management company-wide and that which a few decades ago was considered radical and progressive has become a classic leadership model.¹⁷ Unlike the traditional leadership model wherein the work environment is very impersonal and the influence and skills of subordinates are not used and maximized, the participative management form of leadership taps into employees' resources and human capital and use them to increase job satisfaction and maximize production.

Tulsian argue that employee respond to participative leadership and tend to be satisfied at work because this model encourages workers' development and factors in humans' dignity and their needs for recognition, influence, responsibility, respect, and professional advancement.¹⁸ This finding is no perfunctory details and offers a provisional solution to the concept of work alienation Marxist theorists marshaled against capitalism. In participative management, people have some control over their work and work environment, which promotes harmony between leaders and subordinates as they seek to achieve organizational goals.

Pride et al classify participative leaders in three major categories, namely consultative, consensus, and democratic. Consultative leaders involve subordinates in

¹⁷ Edward E. Lawler III, *Participative Management Strategies: In Applying Psychology In Business: The Handbook For Managers And Human Resource Professionals* (New York, NY: Lexington Books, 1991).

¹⁸ P. C. Tulsian and Vishal Pandey, *Business, Organization, And Management* (New Delhi, India: Dorling, Kindersley, 2009).

leadership discussions and welcome their inputs; final authority for decision-making, however, rests with the leadership, not workers. Consensus leaders generally seek to achieve general agreement. They gather data from the group and encourage employee to discuss an issue that everyone will eventually support. Though leaders retain decision-making power, their decision generally reflect the viewpoint of the majority and a decision is considered final when all parties involved are in agreement. In democratic leadership, the leaders relinquish decision-making power altogether and give final authority to the group.¹⁹

Various approaches to employee participation are used to encourage workers' involvement and participation. These include parallel suggestion involvement, job involvement, and high involvement. In the first level of involvement, communication flows upwardly. Employees' suggestions are welcomed and employees have a say in identifying, analyzing, and solving problems that affect their work. Although they do not have the authority to make decision in some cases, their recommendations are generally examined, if not implemented.²⁰ This approach makes it possible for employees to raise important issues in official meetings and encourages compliance to any eventual changes in the work and work environment.

Job involvement involves enrichment programs and initiatives that empower workers and keep their skills and knowledge in their work area current. Employees are allowed to make changes in their work environment and structure the way they do their job, although these are subject to managerial approval. The genius of this approach lies in

¹⁹ William M. Pride, Robert J. Hughes, & Jack R. Kapoor, *Foundations of Business*, 4th ed. (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2012).

²⁰ Levy and Mihael Junkar, *Technisophy: Strategic Approaches To The Assessment And Management Of Manufacturing Technology Innovation* (Nowell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001).

its immediate practicality. Employees get to see their initiatives and ideas implemented in ways that reflect and affect their daily routine and organizational life.²¹

Involving employees in restructuring their job and work environment yields great dividends. At Texas Instruments, employees were involved in the decision-making discussions about the layout of the work of employees. Reporting the results, Yeatts and Hyten writes,

Once employees were given the opportunity to make decisions, the employees decided to rearrange several large pieces of equipment. This resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars being saved because the new arrangement allowed employees to better coordinate their efforts, and this resulted in considerably more time spent actually performing the work.²²

The high involvement approach also known as commitment approach is the higher form of participative management approaches. It involves employees at the lowest levels in the decision-making process and gives them a sense of ownership in the organization's performance. Employees are involved in decision-making at every step, which empowers and engage them. Information about the organization's performance, reward, and power is shared with transparency and employees know that rewards are based on the overall performance of the organization as well as individual contributions. Ogden Brown in Hendrick and Kleiner write,

The high involvement approach can create an organization in which employees genuinely care about the performance of their organization because they know about it, are able to influence it, are rewarded for it, and enjoy the knowledge and skills to contribute to it.²³

²¹ Tulsian and Pandey, *Business, Organization, And Management*.

²² Dale E. Yeatts & Cloyd Hyten *High- Performing Self-managed Work Teams: A Comparison of Theory to Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 8.

²³ Ogden Brown, Jr. "Macroergonomic Methods: Participation," In Hal W. Hendrick, Brian Kleiner. *Macroergonomics: Theory, Methods, And Applications* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 34.

These approaches rest on a four-pronged practice, namely 1) information about worker knowledge; 2) A reward system based on the performance of the organization; 3) knowledge that helps employee understand and contribute to organizational performance; and 4) the power to act and reach decisions that influence organizational practices and policies, and essentially differ in the degree they are practiced at the lowest organizational level.

Participative leadership has made important strides in the educational system. Part of the reason is the industry requires and attracts highly trained professionals who, by virtue of their knowledge and skills, prefer participative leadership as opposed to authoritarian management. In the educational systems, both higher and lower institutions of learning included, it is rare that one person-leader has mastery of all the disciplines. In fact, even people who have studied the same subject tend to develop a specialization in a specific area. It is precisely in this context that shared leadership is needed the most.

Participative leadership is needed when the challenges a corporation faces are so complex that they require a set of skills too broad to be possessed by any one individual.²⁴

Involving these individuals in the decision-making process both lessens employee frustration and enriches the overall decisions' quality. This observation is substantiated by research studies. Druckman, Singer, and Cott write: Leader's use of participative decision making improves decision quality when subordinates have information and ideas

²⁴ J. O'Toole, J. Galbraith, and E. E. Lawler, (2002). "When Two (Or More) Heads Are Better Than One: The Promise And Pitfalls Of Shared Leadership," *California Management Review*, 44: 65-83.

not possessed by the leader and are willing to cooperate with the leader in finding a good way to achieve their shared objectives.²⁵

Participative management involves senior management including teachers in the decision-making process that affects their work and working environment. These include choosing textbooks and instructional materials, shaping the curriculum, setting standards for student behavior, designing staff development programs, setting promotion and retention policies, deciding school budget, evaluating teacher performance, and selecting new teachers and administrators. Participative management does not stand over against curriculum standardization as accrediting agencies make certain demands of learning institutions. It creates the room and makes provision for teachers to be innovative in their context. In other words, teachers are allowed to cover subject-content in a way that is effective and creative.

Participative management yields great dividends to institutions of learning and those involved. These include intellectual and professional growth, decreased isolation, and enhanced self-esteem. In addition, teachers' knowledge and skills are shown to have increased as a consequence of participative leadership, which, in turn, result in teachers' increased confidence and commitment to teaching.²⁶

The benefit of participative management has been phenomenal at Hunterdon High School in New Jersey. Some of the traditionally superintendent decision-making power was shared with a team of students, parents, and teachers. Among the notable

²⁵ Daniel Druckman, Jerome E. Singer, & Harold Van Cott, *Enhancing Organizational Performance* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1997), 110.

²⁶ Dale E. Yeatts, & Cloyd Hyten, *High-Performing Self-managed Work Teams: A Comparison of Theory to Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998).

accomplishments of this team is a technological revamping of the school that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Daft and Marcic write,

The team found a way to equip the school with PCs, video facilities, ISDN lines, fiber-optic cables for \$40,000 per classroom. Hunterdon has a student run FM radio station, a television studio, a telephone in every classroom, and a state-of-the art instructional media center. Each classroom is linked to the school library, to the Internet, and to a host of other databases²⁷

Studies in classrooms have shown that participative leadership resulted in cooperative, socially constructive, and healthy behavior in the student population whereas students in authoritarian or dominating classrooms showed unproductive behavior, frustration, hostility, self-centeredness, and socially inapt behaviors.²⁸ On learning outcomes, Dimock and Devine write, “While dominating teachers often had students who learned as much or more, the participative classrooms found greater changes in attitudes and behavior, more growth in self-direction and confidence, and all round healthier students.”²⁹

Participative Management in Nursing

The earliest evidence for participative leadership in the nursing discipline dates back to the early 1990s. Earlier studies showed that nurses were dissatisfied with their work and working environment because of the inherent lack of autonomy over their practice and their exclusion in debates on nursing policies. Some scholars identify lack of

²⁷ Richard L. Daft, & Dorothy Marcic, *Understanding Management*, 5th ed. (Mason OH: Thompson Learning, 2006), 424.

²⁸ Hedley G. Dimock & Iren Devine, *Making Workgroups Effective* 3rd ed. (Concord, ON: Captus Press, 1994).

²⁹ Druckman, Singer & Cott, *Enhancing Organizational Performance*, 12.

control over nursing practice as a significant variable on recruiting and retaining nurses.³⁰

Like other professionals, nurses want to have control over their workflow and daily practice; they want to have a say in the modus operandi of the nursing units and help determine efficient care practices.

The 1980s saw unparalleled interests in humanizing models, like participative management and decentralization practices, determined to make organizations employees-friendly through participation. In business, academic circles, and the health care industry shared governance was the buzzword and it found expressions and different adaptations based on the needs of each organization and their respective workers.³¹

For Strasen, participative management on a nursing unit is imperative and requires five steps prior to implementation. These include:

1. Assessing the nursing organization
2. Developing a plan of implementation
3. Educating the staff
4. Implement the participative management plan
5. Evaluating and revising the plan as needed³²

The earlier sites of implementation were St. Joseph Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, St. Michael's Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Carondelet St. Mary Hospital in

³⁰ V. S. Cleland, "Shared Governance In A Professional Model of Collective Bargaining," *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 8(5), (1978): 39-43.

³¹ R. Hess, "From Bedside to Boardroom: Nursing Shared Governance," *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, vol. 9 No.1, (January 31, 2004).

³² L. Strasen, "Participative Management: A Contribution To Professionalism," *Critical Care Nurse*, no. 3, (November 1, 1983): 35-36.

Tucson, Arizona, and Rose Medical Center in Denver, Colorado.³³ Follow-up research showed a positive relationship between organizational performance, worker value, and work outcomes. Porter–O’Grady writes,

I would challenge anyone to find contrary evidence when the principles of partnership, equity, accountability, and ownership are exemplified in the workplace and in its relationship to the worker. And, quite frankly, I have never seen any successful shared decision-making model that does not exemplify these four principles.³⁴

Hess highlights three general models of participative management or shared governance that have emerged in the nursing discipline, namely, councilor, administrative, and congressional models.³⁵ In the councilor model, a coordinating council integrates the decisions managers and subcommittees constituted staff make.³⁶ Hess further explicates this model and writes: “The councilor model structures staff and managers governance through the use of committees or councils of elected representatives. Each council is responsible for certain functions and has clearly defined authority.”³⁷

The congressional model is essentially a democratic process where nurses are empowered to vote on issues affecting their work and practice. Hess argues that it is a model akin to America’s representative form of government and appointed or elected

³³ Hess, "From Bedside to Boardroom – Nursing Shared Governance."

³⁴ T. Porter-O’Grady, “Researching shared governance – A futility of focus,” *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 33, no. 4 (2003): 251-252.

³⁵ Hess, "From Bedside to Boardroom – Nursing Shared Governance."

³⁶ Hess, "From Bedside to Boardroom – Nursing Shared Governance," 3.

³⁷ Huber, *Leadership and Nursing Care Management*, 433.

nursing units representative make decision through the democratic process.³⁸ Naturally, not all decisions will be made with a unanimous vote; however, like in all democratic body it is the vote of the majority that rules.

The administrative model generally involves a dicephalous or twin system, one with a clinical focus and the other with a management focus. This model bears a resemblance to the bureaucratic for of management structure, except that it encompasses both managers and staff in the decision-making process.³⁹ There are instances where staff nurses are called to take on clinician' roles such as charge nurse, staffing, and delegation, among other things. It is not evident that this practice is the norm in other hospital, but it is so at Stony Brook University Hospital.

Participative management is shown to be fruitful in business and helping disciplines alike. It taps into the resources that lay dormant in employees and fulfills their needs for recognition and involvement in decisions that affect their work and working environment. It has never been God's intention for the church to be a one-person show where one person carries the burden of the work and enjoys the spotlight. A participative management approach to pastoral ministry involves church elders in the work and encourages them to help shoulder the leadership burden to help build God's kingdom and equip people to live fruitful lives in the church and in the community.

Nevarez argues, when people are skilled, seasoned, and experts in their field, this approach yields imaginable dividends."⁴⁰ The Holy Spirit equips people with spiritual

³⁸ Huber, *Leadership and Nursing Care Management*, 433.

³⁹ Huber, *Leadership and Nursing Care Management*, 433.

⁴⁰ Carlos Nevarez, J. Luke Wood, and Rose Penrose, *Leadership Theory And The Community College: Applying Theory To Proactive* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2013).

gifts to serve the church and edify the body of Christ. Pastors should encourage people to use their talent and not hinder their growth by allowing them to put their talent to work in the congregation where God calls them to serve. In so doing, their workload will be lightened and the congregation and people will develop and hone their skills to do God's work.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The aim of this doctoral project is to develop a model that will increase the effectiveness of local church elders at Salem French Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. Church eldership has become an honorific title in the church, leaving the pastor with the brunt of the work while most local church elders are content to be on the platform on Sabbath worship services and do nothing else. The results of this study will be used to conduct bi-annual training sessions for Salem SDA Church elders. They may also be shared with other Haitian SDA Churches encountering the same problem to encourage effective local church eldership in their respective context.

The Haitian community in Jacksonville, Florida is growing. The city attracts Haitian from South Florida and the northern states who come seeking employment and a more affordable place to live. The Haitian Adventists join the church but find it difficult to stay and grow due to serious leadership issues. The church's growth is slowed by a lack of adequate leadership. Also, tensions arise between and amongst members and leaders owing to the fact that their respective roles, expectations, and limits are blurry. The defining problem we seek to address is the lack of trained and effective church elders at Salem French SDA Church. The issue is to design a training model to train church elders to lead the church with and in the absence of a pastor. The role of the church elder needs

to be revisited and discussed so that their ecclesiastical authority and their duty are clearly stipulated to ensure accountability.

The proposed hypothesis was: if church elders are trained, empowered, and work effectively, the burden of ministry will be shared, and the church will function properly in the pastor's absence. The expected results from the model are to attract and keep the Haitian Seventh-day Adventists from the northern states who come to Jacksonville seeking employment and a more affordable place to live, to encourage Haitian non-church goers to consider become members of our faith community, to keep the Haitian Adventists who have joined the church but find it difficult to stay and grow due to serious leadership gloss, and to decrease tensions arising between and amongst members and leaders owing to the fact that their respective roles, expectations, and limits are blurry. There is a possibility that some elders may feel inadequate and grossly unprepared as the training sessions progress.

Introductory remarks were made to make research subjects at ease as they go through the training. Also, the benefits of participating will be discussed to assuage and alleviate the potential fear of feeling inadequate. By participating in this study, church elders should be equipped to carry their role responsibly and effectively, the church would benefit from good leadership as evidenced in spiritually nourishing services, coordinated in-reach and outreach programs, good fiscal practices, and oversight of the maintenance of the church facility.

Methodology

A qualitative research methodology will be used to carry out this project. The nature of the question the researcher hopes to answer (what training model would help increase local church elders' effectiveness?) will drive the research methodology. Three techniques were used to collect the data, namely: training sessions, one focus group discussion, and two questionnaires based on two sermons. Training sessions began with pretest questions to assess participants' understanding prior to the intervention. Then, training sessions ensued, which was the intervention. Participants were asked to answer posttest questions to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

Five training sessions lasting two hours each were held. The sixth session was divided in two equal halves, lasting one hour to one hour and a half each. The latter half of the session was used to conduct a focus group discussion to talk about the making of an elder and hindrances to effective eldership at Salem French SDA Church.

Teaching methods included group discussions, audiovisual presentations, and teaching modules. The first session included a presentation on the biblical and theological foundations of church eldership. Also, the different types of organizational church polity, in general, and the one Seventh-day Adventists adopt, in particular, was discussed. Principles of shared leadership were also discussed.

The second session addressed the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) and the levels of leadership at the greater organizational level (Conferences, Unions, Divisions, and the General Conference) and at the local church level. Ministries at the local church level were discussed with a particular attention to the office of church elders. Concepts and issues in case management were also discussed.

The third and fourth sessions covered issues of practical ministry. These included protocol for home and hospital visits, administering the sacraments (baptism and communion), the elements of the worship service, and the role of the church elder in marriage ceremonies, baby dedication, and funeral services.

The fifth session explored issues of church administration and evangelism. Particular attention was paid to the work of the church clerk and the treasurer. Elders learned how to run a board meeting using Robert's Rule of Order. They also learned how to coordinate an evangelistic meeting and how to be involve in outreach projects to carry out the Great Commission of preaching the gospel.

The last session covered the ministry of the word. Principles of public speaking and sermon preparation were discussed. A posttest was included to assess participant's progress and informed understanding of church eldership. Elders were also be provided an opportunity to share their views on the benefits and limitations of the training and it's potential for elders' effectiveness in the latter part of this meeting, which focused on group discussion. The project calendar and timeline is as follows:

- February 6 – Session 1
 - Biblical, historical, and theological Foundations of church elders
- February 13 – Session 2
 - Church polity, local and higher organization structure
 - Eldership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- February 20 – Session 3
 - Practical Ministry I: Administering the Sacraments (Baptism and Communion)
 - Protocol for home and hospital visits

- February 27 - Session 4
 - Practical Ministry II: Elements of the worship service
 - The elder and special services (Marriage, funeral, baby dedication, etc.)
- March 6 – Session 5
 - Issues in church administration
 - Understanding the work of the church clerk and treasurer
- March 13 – Session 6
 - Principles of public speaking and the ministry of the word
 - Posttest and final remarks

Implementation

The focus of this chapter is to analyze and interpret the data collected during the implementation phase of this doctoral project at Salem French SDA Church. The lack of abled leadership and organizational structure in the church, owing to years of internal conflicts and power struggle among the elders in the absence of a resident pastor, called for in-depth and extensive training sessions to both empower and enable church elders to do the work efficiently and responsibly. The rationale is that if elders are trained and empowered to take on the role of elder in the context of the SDA Church, then they will be able to render a better service to the church and help the pastor carry the burden of pastoral ministry.

The model tested was a mixed research design. This methodology made it possible to examine the church's elders understanding of the office of elder in the SDA church tradition and its place in the Judeo-Christian's historical continuum. The

methodology involved giving research participants a pretest and posttest questionnaire, journal questions, and a group interview. The data triangulation technique used in this study buttresses the research methodology and supports the findings.

The pretest questionnaire was intended to assess the knowledge of research participants prior to the intervention, that is, the teaching and interacting session. As it will be discussed later, some elders are more advanced than others in church leadership, professional, and academic accomplishments, which helped their understanding of theologically complex concepts and their eventual applications.

The posttest questionnaire helped ascertain how much of the information given was retained. Their answers served as a litmus test, as it were, to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention. Research participants showed a significant increase in their understanding of the topic discussed as evidenced by answering correctly questions they previously missed.

Research participants were also asked to answer journal questions, which forces them to put into their words the concepts that were discussed. This is an important aspect of evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention. Having research participants engaged and involved in journaling made it possible to ascertain, although it was not an objective of the project, their ability to synthesize the information they received and how much of it they fully integrated.

At last, a group interview was made and research participants were asked to share their experience participating in the training sessions. The response was overwhelmingly warm and the exercise was said to have been seminal and pivotal in the history of the church, charting the path for better days in the day-to-day operation of the church. In

addition, it created a level of camaraderie in the group that was much needed, an atmosphere of collegiality that makes working in the church less controversial and competitive and more collaborative and supportive.

The people involved in the project were the context associates, active elders and non-elected elders, (ordained elders who were not chosen to serve this year in the church eldership), and people who show potential for church leadership, of whom three were nominated to become church directors, which is another name for non-ordained elders, making a total of ten people.

Session One

Research participants were once more made aware that the project would span over a period of six successive Fridays. The goal was to train elders to become effective in order to alleviate the pastors' load and help him carry the burden of pastoral ministry. Participants' expectations were discussed as related to punctuality, attendance, tardiness, etc. and the benefit and risks of participating were also delineated. Developing a tolerance and showing Christian love when things are done differently than what will be taught was deemed vitally important, especially for participants who are non-active and potential elders, lest they become possessed with the spirit of destructive criticism and render the work difficult for those the church nominated carry it out. The workshop covered the historical, theological, and biblical foundations of church elder. The following is the result of the analytical study of the data collected in the sessions. It involves pretest and posttest results, journal questions, and a group interview.

Question 1: The elders in Israel served what purpose?

Pretest Results:

- 70% of the participants responded that Israel had elders for religious purposes
- 20% responded that Israel had elders for social purposes, authority figures
- 10% of the research subjects responded that Israel had elders for both religious and social reasons

Posttest Results:

- 80% of the participants responded that the elders in Israel had both a religious and social purpose
- 10% of the participants responded that the elders in Israel had a religious purpose only
- 10% of the participants responded that the elders in Israel had a social purpose only

Question 2: Most people believe this about a church elder?

Pretest Results:

- 70% of the participants responded an older person who has been in the church for at least (ten) 10 years and is able to lead
- 20% of the participants responded that any person, young or old, who has the calling and is not a new convert (more than 5 years)
- 10% of the participants responded that an elder, irrespective of gifts and talents, must not be a new convert (less than 5 years)

Posttest Results:

- 90% of the participants responded that any person, young or old, who has the calling and is not a new convert (more than 5 years)
- 10% of the participants responded that an older person who has been in the church for at least (ten) years and is able to lead

Question 3: Which of the following best reflects the concept of church elders based on biblical, historical, and theological findings?

Pretest Results:

- 30% of the participants responded that the concept of church elders refers to a church office
- 40% of the participants responded that the concept of church elders refers to a church calling
- 30% of the participants responded that the concept of church elders refers to a service

Posttest Results:

- 30% of the participants responded that the concept of church elders refers to a church office
- 40% of the participants responded that the concept of church elders refers to a church calling
- 30% of the participants responded that the concept of church elders refers to a service

Question 4: Which of the following passages of the Bible support the institution of elders?

Pretest Results:

- 10% of the participants responded that 1 Peter 1:21 is the biblical foundation passage for church elders
- 40% of the participants responded that Numbers 11: 16, 17 is the biblical foundation passage for church elders
- 30% of the participants responded that 1 Titus 1: 6-8 is the biblical foundation passage for church elders
- 20% of the participants responded that 1 Titus 1: 6-8 and Numbers 11: 16, 17 is the biblical foundation passage for church elders

Pretest Results:

- 20% of the participants responded that Numbers 11: 16, 17 is the biblical foundation passage for church elders
- 10% of the participants responded that 1 Titus 1: 6-8 is the biblical foundation passage for church elders

- 70% of the participants responded that 1 Titus 1: 6-8 and Numbers 11: 16, 17 is the biblical foundation passage for church elders

Question 5: In the early first century church, the terms bishop and the elders are used to express which of the following?

Pretest Results:

- 50% of the participants responded that in the early church the terms bishop and elders were used to express that the bishop was superior to the elder
- 10% of the participants responded that in the early church the terms bishop and elders were used to express that the elders were superior to the bishop
- 40% of the participants responded that in the early church the terms bishop and elders were used to express that the bishop and elders were one and the same

Posttest Results:

- 10% of the participants responded that in the early church the terms bishop and elders were used to express that the bishop was superior to the elder
- 10% of the participants responded that in the early church the terms bishop and elders were used to express that the elders were superior to the bishop
- 80% of the participants responded that in the early church the terms bishop and elders were used to express that the bishop and elders were one and the same

Question 6: What place of leadership elders had in the early church?

Pretest Results:

- 20% of the participants responded that elders were the primary leaders of the church and the church had no senior pastor
- 20% of the participants responded that elders worked together and had equal weight in church leadership
- 60% of the participants responded that the church was always led by a pastor

Posttest Results:

- 10 % of the participants responded that elders were the primary leaders of the church and the church had no senior pastor

- 90% of the participants responded that elders worked together and had equal weight in church leadership

Session Two

Organization in church operation is vitally important. In conducting the Lord's business, nothing should be left to chance. Every necessary precaution must be taken to ensure that the church runs like a well-oiled machine to maintain order and continuity. Church polity, local and higher organizational structure, and elders nominating process and terms of service were discussed; also, the role of elders as "local pastors," their spiritual qualification, and ethical responsibilities were examined in depth. Prior knowledge was assessed in pretest questions, and the effectiveness of the intervention was to be determined by posttest answers to the same questions.

Question 1: The model of elders in the SDA church is more like the elders of...?

Pretest Results:

- 60% of the participants responded that the model of eldership in the SDA church is more like the model in the New Testament Church
- 30% of the participants responded that the model of eldership in the SDA church is more like the model in the Old Testament
- 10% of the participants responded that the model of eldership in the SDA Church is similar to both Old and Testaments model

Posttest Results:

- 80% of the participants responded that the model of eldership in the SDA Church is more like the model in the New Testament Church
- 20% of the participants responded that the model of eldership in the SDA Church is similar to both Old and New Testaments model

Question 2: How does one become an elder in the SDA Church?

Pretest Results:

- 10% of the participants responded that a person becomes an elder in the SDA church when God calls the person
- 80% of the participants responded that a person becomes an elder in the SDA Church when the local church accepts the recommendation of the nominating committee and votes the person into office
- 10% of the participants responded that a person becomes an elder when both God calls and the local church accepts the recommendation of the nominating committee and votes the person into office

Posttest Results:

- 90% of the participants responded that a person becomes an elder in the SDA church when God calls and the local church accepts the recommendation of the nominating committee and votes the person into office
- 10% of the participants responded that a person becomes an elder in the SDA Church when the local church accepts the recommendation of the nominating committee and votes the person into office

Question 3: How important is organization in running the church?

Pretest Results:

- 60% of the participants responded that church organization is vitally important to maintain order in the church
- 30% of the participants responded that organization is good, but not fundamentally important
- 10% of the participants responded that church organization is not important and at times slow the progress of the church

Posttest Results:

- 80% of the participants responded that church organization is vitally important to maintain order in the church
- 10% of the participants responded that organization is good, but not fundamentally important

- 10% of the participants responded that church organization is not important and at times slow the progress of the church

Question 4: Which of the following is the most important qualification of an elder?

Pretest Results:

- 50% of the participants responded that the most important qualifications of an elder is spirituality and the ability to teach
- 20% of the participants responded that the most important qualification of an elder is the ability to lead
- 30% of the participants responded that the most important qualification of an elder is the ability to administer

Posttest Results:

- 70% of the participants responded that the most important qualifications of an elder is spirituality and the ability to teach
- 10% of the participants responded that the most important qualification of an elder is the ability to lead
- 20% of the participants responded that the most important qualification of an elder is the ability to administer

Question 5: Which of the following statements about the ethical distinction between elders and pastors is biblically correct?

Pretest Results:

- 60% of the participants responded that God requires the same things from the elders and pastors alike
- 40% of the participants responded that more is required from the pastor

Posttest Results:

- 100% of the participants responded that God requires the same things from elders and pastors alike

Question 6: Which of the following statement is correct regarding an elder's professional ethics?

Pretest Results:

- 40% of the participants responded that an elder should embrace the modus operandi of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- 20% of the participants responded that an elder may not accept everything about the modus operandi of the church but must keep it to him or herself
- 40% of the participants responded that an elder is entitled to share and teach points of the modus operandi of the church with which he or she is not comfortable

Posttest Results:

- 20% of the participants responded that an elder should embrace the modus operandi of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- 70% of the participants responded that an elder may not accept everything about the modus operandi of the church but must keep it to him or herself
- 10% of the participants responded that an elder is entitled to share and teach points of the modus operandi of the church with which he or she is not comfortable

Question 7: What sort of relationship should the pastor and elders have?

Pretest Results:

- 50% of the participants responded that an elder should be the pastor's counselor and supporter even when he may not agree with his vision
- 30% of the participants responded that an elder should be the pastor's harshest critic to help him or her grow and do better
- 20% of the participants responded that an elder is the pastor's celebrator

Posttest Results:

- 90% of the participants responded that an elder should be the pastor's counselor and supporter even when he may not agree with his vision
- 10% of the participants responded that an elder is the pastor's celebrator

Question 8: Which of the following answer best reflect the model of church leadership in the early church (Apostolic church)?

Pretest Results:

- 40% of the participants responded that the model of church leadership in the early church was democratic
- 20% of the participants responded that the model of church leadership in the early church was shared leadership
- 30% of the participants responded that the model of church leadership in the early church was authoritarian
- 10% of the participants responded that the model of church leadership in the early church was laissez-faire

Posttest Results:

- 10% of the participants responded that the model of church leadership in the early church was democratic
- 80% of the participants responded that the model of church leadership in the early church was shared leadership
- 10% of the participants responded that the model of church leadership in the early church was authoritarian

Question 9: The Seventh-day Adventist polity model resembles which of the following?

Pretest Results:

- 40% of the participants responded that the Seventh-day Adventist polity model is congregational
- 40% of the participants responded that the Seventh-day Adventist polity model is episcopal
- 20% of the participants responded that the Seventh-day Adventist polity model is Presbyterian

Posttest Results:

- 10% of the participants responded that the Seventh-day Adventist polity model is congregational
- 10% of the participants responded that the Seventh-day Adventist polity model is episcopal

- 80% of the participants responded that the Seventh-day Adventist polity model is Presbyterian

Session Three

Session three was designed to acquaint participants with the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Elder. Special attention was paid to the administration of the sacraments, particularly Holy Communion and baptism. The work of the elder as a shepherd was discussed at length and in great depth, paying particular attention to concepts of pastor (Gk: *poimen*), watchman, feeder, lover, rescue worker, guide, guard, and healer. Prior knowledge was assessed in pretest questions, and the effectiveness of the intervention was to be determined by posttest answers to the same questions.

Question 1: Which of the following reflect the sacramental practice in the Seventh-day Adventist church?

Pretest Results:

- 30% of the participants responded that only the pastor is allowed to do baptism and give Holy Communion
- 40% of the participants responded that ordained elders can perform baptism and give Holy Communion with the pastor's permission
- 20% of the participants responded that elders, ordained or not, are not allowed to do baptism and give Holy Communion

Posttest Results:

- 20% of the participants responded that only the pastor is allowed to do baptism and give Holy Communion
- 70% of the participants responded that ordained elders can perform baptism and give Holy Communion with the pastor's permission
- 10% of the participants responded that elders, ordained or not, are not allowed to do baptism and give Holy Communion

Question 2: In the absence of a pastor, who should perform the sacraments?

Pretest Results:

- 70% of the participants responded that in the absence of a pastor, the first elder should take the lead and perform the sacraments
- 20% of the participants responded that in the absence of a pastor, the first elder or who ever the pastor delegates should take the lead and perform the sacraments
- 10% of the participants responded that in the absence of a pastor any ordained elder is qualified to perform the sacraments with the pastor's permission

Posttest results:

- 70% of the participants responded that in the absence of a pastor, the first elder should take the lead and perform the sacraments
- 20% of the participants responded that in the absence of a pastor, the first elder or who ever the pastor delegates should take the lead and perform the sacraments
- 10% of the participants responded that in the absence of a pastor any ordained elder is qualified to perform the sacraments with the pastor's permission

Question 3: Is this statement true: home visitation is still important, but not as important as hospital visitation (Yes or No)?

Pretest Results:

- 30% - Yes
- 70% - No

Posttest Results:

- 90% - Yes
- 10% - No answer

Question 4: Is the following statement true: The primary reason elders do not visit because church members do not want them in their homes (Yes or No)?

Pretest Results:

- 60% - No
- 40% - Yes

Posttest Results:

- 90% - Yes
- 10% - No

Question 5: Which of the following is vitally important to ensure the success of the home visit?

Pretest Results?

- 60% of participants responded that planning the visit ahead of time and calling the person a couple of hours before is the most important predictors of a positive response from church members
- 30% of participants responded that planning the visit ahead of time and calling the person a couple of hours before is important, but not necessary
- 20% of the participants responded that it is neither important nor necessary to plan ahead of time or call. If the person needs to be visited, they'll open their doors at any time

Posttest Results:

- 80% of participants responded that planning the visit ahead of time and calling the person a couple of hours before is the most important predictors of a positive response from church members
- 10% of participants responded that planning the visit ahead of time and calling the person a couple of hours before is important, but not necessary
- 10% of the participants responded that it is neither important nor necessary to plan ahead of time or call. If the person needs to be visited, they'll open their doors at any time

Question 6: Which of the following is the primary reason for home visitation?

Pretest Question:

- 20% of the participants responded that the primary reason for home visitation is to find out where church members live and check on them in case of emergency
- 50% of the participants responded that the primary reason for home visitation is to foster Christian fellowship and provide encouragement
- 30% of the participants responded that the primary reason for home visitation is to find out where church members live and check on them in case of emergency and to foster fellowship and provide encouragement

Posttest Question:

- 20% of the participants responded that the primary reason for home visitation is to find out where church members live and check on them in case of emergency
- 50% of the participants responded that the primary reason for home visitation is to foster Christian fellowship and provide encouragement
- 30% of the participants responded that the primary reason for home visitation is to find out where church members live and check on them in case of emergency and to foster fellowship and provide encouragement

Session Four

Public worship is a central element of Seventh-day Adventist religious practice. Whether it is a Sabbath or a midweek worship service, it is expected that it be planned, well organized, and uplifting. While the pastor has oversight of every service of the church, it is the responsibility of the elder on duty to ensure that the service is planned ahead of time and that every participant plays their role as assigned to them. This session was designed to review the church liturgy, the responsibilities of church elders in worship and special services, such as marriage, funeral, and baby dedication. Research

participants' prior to the teaching intervention was assessed; the effectiveness of the intervention was to be determined by posttest answers to the same questions.

Question 1: In the Seventh-day Adventist church, the elder on duty is responsible for planning and ensuring the successful execution of the worship service (Yes or No)?

Pretest Results:

- 40% - Yes
- 50% - No
- 10% - No answer

Posttest Results:

- 90% - Yes
- 10% - No answer

Question 2: The pastor and elder on duty (in the absence of the pastor) can change the liturgy and the order of the worship service when and if so moved (Yes or No).

Pretest Results:

- 70% - Yes
- 20% - No
- 10% - No answer

Posttest Results:

- 90% - Yes
- 10% - No

Question 3: Is fellowship, just as prayer, and praise is an essential element of worship (Yes or No)

Pretest Results:

- 50% - Yes
- 50% - No

Posttest Results:

- 90% - Yes
- 10% - No

Question 4: Is offering is not an essential element of worship (Yes or No)?

Pretest Results:

- 50% - Yes
- 50% - No

Posttest Results:

- 80% - Yes
- 10% - No
- 10% - No answer

Question 5: Seventh-day Adventist worship involves praise, proclamation, prayer, fellowship, and offering (Yes or No).

Pretest Results:

- 50% - Yes
- 50% - No

Posttest Results:

- 90% - Yes
- 10% - No

Question 6: Corporate worship is meeting God in the company of others (Yes or No).

Pretest Results:

- 80% - Yes
- 20% - No

Posttest Results:

- 90% - Yes
- 10% - No

Question 7: Corporate worship is the culmination or the apex of personal worship (Yes or No).

Pretest Results:

- 60% - Yes
- 40% - No

Posttest Results:

- 80% - Yes
- 20% - No

Question 7: Church elders are allowed to perform all of the following except:

Pretest Results:

- 50% - Marriage
- 30% - Funeral
- 20% - Baby Dedication

Posttest Results:

- 90% - Marriage
- 10% - Funeral

Session Five

Much of the day-to-day operation of the church hangs on the administrative skills of the pastor together with the board of elders and the church board and the harmony between them. In this researcher's experience administrative problems in the Seventh-day

Adventist Haitian churches rarely originates from the pew. It is usually the elders who, due to a lack of understanding of their role and the limitation of their authority, often engage in a power struggle and incessant fights to usurp the authority of the pastor or to attempt to lead the church through him or her. At times, elders present themselves as the true defenders of the local church's interests and portray the pastor as an employee of the conference whose sole purpose is to send remittances to the hiring organization at the expense of the church. It is, then vital, that elders understand their role, as members of the local church leadership team and not as that of the pastor as the captain, as it were, of the team. Hence, their role as assistants to the pastor needs agreeing upon lest to thwart power struggle and potential rift in the church. Prior knowledge was assessed in pretest questions, and the effectiveness of the intervention was to be determined by posttest answers to the same questions.

Question 1: When the conference assigns a pastor to a local church, the pastor is the ranking officer in that church and the elders are his or her assistants (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 70% - True
- 30% - False

Posttest Results:

- 90% - True
- 10% - False

Question 2: The work of the pastor is closely related to that of local elders. Therefore, decision-making and vision casting should involve and not be done without local elders approval (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 80% - True
- 20% - False

Posttest Results:

- 10% - True
- 90% - False

Question 3: The local church runs better when elders serve as assistants to and support the vision of the pastor for the church (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 50% - True
- 50% - False

Posttest Results:

- 80% - True
- 20% - False

Question 4: While it is a good practice to take counsel from the elders, it is the pastor's privilege to determine what decision would benefit the church's mission and vision (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 60% - True
- 40% - False

Posttest Results:

- 90% - True
- 10% - False

Question 5: No church elder should be expected to support a pastor's vision if he or she is not in agreement with the vision (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 50% - True
- 50% - False

Posttest Results:

- 20% - True
- 80% - False

Question 6: Local elders are expected to know how each church department operates to provide proper counsel and guidance when needed (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 80% - True
- 20% - False

Posttest Results:

- 90% - True
- 10% - False

Question 7: In the absence of the pastor, the first or any elder can chair the church board with the permission of the pastor (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 90% - True
- 10% - No answer

Posttest Results:

- 90% - True
- 10% - No answer

Question 8: Only the pastor can call a board meeting or the first elder with the permission of the pastor (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 60% - True
- 40% - False

Posttest Results:

- 90% - True
- 10% - False

Question 9: The treasurer is expected to give a report of tithes and offering receive for each worship service to the pastor or the first elder in the absence of the pastor (True or False).

Pretest Results:

- 70% - True
- 30% - False

Posttest Results:

- 90% - True
- 10% - False

Session Six

Unlike most church elders in other congregations, the Seventh-day Adventist elder will have the opportunity to occupy the pulpit several times a year. While some Seventh-day Adventist churches have a person that serves only one congregation, may even have associate pastors given the size of the church, and the remittance it generates, most pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church serves two and sometimes three congregations. It is, hence, very common for the pastor to see a congregation every other week and entrust the local elders with the responsibility to occupy the pulpit. This session

was divided in two equal halves. In the first half (that is one hour to one hour and a half) the essentials of public speaking was discussed and the basic structure of a sermon was examined. In the second half, a group interview was held to discuss the making of an elder and hindrances to effective eldership at Salem French SDA Church.

Question 1: Which of the following passage of the Bible stipulates that an elder is to be able to teach?

Pretest Results:

- 10% of the participants responded that Nehemiah 1: 26 is the biblical foundation passage that stipulates that an elder is to be able to teach
- 60% of the participants responded that 1 Timothy 3:2 is the biblical foundation passage that stipulates that an elder is to be able to teach
- 30% of the participants responded that James 2: 5 is the biblical foundation passage that stipulates that an elder is to be able to teach

Posttest Results:

- 80% of the participants responded that 1 Timothy 3:2 is the biblical foundation passage that stipulates that an elder is to be able to teach
- 10% of the participants responded that James 2:5 is the biblical foundation passage that stipulates that an elder is to be able to teach

Question 2: Preaching is an essential part of the elder's responsibilities in most Seventh-day Adventist congregations (True or False).

Pretest Results

- 70% - True
- 30% False

Pretest Results

- 90% - True
- 10% False

Question 3: The anointing of the Holy Spirit is the most important characteristics of good preaching (True or False).

Posttest Results

- 90% - True
- 10% False

Pretest Results

- 100% - True

Question 4: Knowing and following principles of public speaking adds or takes nothing in the preaching experience.

Pretest Results

- 50% - True
- 40% - False
- 10% - No answer

Posttest Results

- 20% - True
- 80% - False

Question 5: A good sermon must be clear, well organized, Bible-based, and Spirit-filled (True or False).

Pretest Results

- 90% - True
- 10% - False

Posttest Results

- 100% - True

Group Interview

A group interview of research participants was conducted to ascertain the effectiveness of the intervention and to collect more data. This exercise allowed the researcher and peer associates to engage research subjects in guided dialogue to unravel issues underlying poor eldership. Participants were eager to share their views on the modus operandi of the church and their understanding of effective eldership. Issues at the heart of elders-pastor conflict were discussed, and important themes emerged that can be helpful in encouraging church elders to perform better and work harmoniously with the pastor for the benefit of the congregation and the church's evangelical mission.

Question 1: What are the characteristics of a good local church elder?

- Responsible
- Caring
- Competent
- Team player
- Peacemaker
- Someone who has great leadership skills
- Someone who cares about people and does the job: visit the sick, lead worship service, oversees the overall church operation, and loves God
- Someone who can keep things confidential
- Someone who has a good reputation and works well with people
- Someone who is trustworthy

Question 2: Why are good local church elders necessary?

- To help the pastor lead the church
- To provide leadership in the pastor's absence

- To counsel the pastor and support his vision for the church
- To help visit members
- To equip the congregation for evangelism
- To maintain church order
- To help manage the business of the church

Question 3: What sort of relationship must exist between local church elders and the pastor?

- Local church elders should be the pastor's closest friends
- Harmonious relationship
- Collegial interaction
- Mutual respect and appreciation
- Cooperation to achieve the mission of the church
- Honest and respectful counsels
- Not conflicting, but brutally honest
- A good relationship: no backstabbing, hypocritical, and evil; but loving and kind.

Question 4: What are some barriers to effective church eldership?

- No time to do the work
- Carelessness and fatigue
- Poor interpersonal skills
- Lack of training and spirituality
- Lack of knowledge in areas of the church doctrines
- Inability to teach the word
- Micromanaging pastor

- Members challenging the authority of local church elders and pastor's diminishing the power of the local church elders
- Not liking the pastor
- Not agreeing with the pastor's vision for the church
- No encouragement from church members and the pastor
- No setting of clear goals and evaluation system
- No genuine fellowship between local church elders and the pastor

Question 5: What needs to be done to ensure the church has good and effective church elders?

- Regular annual training – at least twice a year
- Setting clear goals for each elder and establish a system of evaluating the local church elder's work
- Mutual respect between the pastor and local church elders
- Setting aside regular time in the week to do the job: visit with the members, planning worship service when an elder is on duty
- Having a personal devotional life
- Follow protocol and do the job as expected and told
- Know and respect the limit of one's authority
- Obtain regular report from local church elders in elders' board meeting
- Have times for pastoral staff fellowship

Sermons

A two-part sermon series was delivered to address the benefits of good eldership and the relief it brings to the congregation on the one hand, and the pastor on the other hand. The Biblical texts used toward that end were Exodus 18:17, 18 and Numbers 12: 1-

16. The Exodus passage reveals at least three important benefits of good eldership. These include, reaching more people, relieving pastoral burden, and refocusing on the mission. By involving capable and willing hands in the job, Moses was able to reach more people through them than he could have ever done alone.

A questionnaire was given after the sermon to evaluate how much of the teaching research participants retained and the effectiveness of the intervention. Research participants were asked to stay after service to answer some questions pertaining to their understanding of the teaching as it related to effective church eldership and the elder-pastor relationship. The following results were obtained:

Question 1: One of the most important benefits of shared leadership is increased pastoral effectiveness and efficient use of resources (True or False).

- 90% - True
- 10% - False

Question 2: Delegation assuages the burden of pastoral leadership (True or False).

- 90% - True
- 10% - No answer

Question 3: The sermon was structure around three R's: Reaching, Relieving, and Refocusing (True or False).

- 100% - True

The second sermon dealt with the dangers of critiquing church leaders and its effects on both the congregation and the critics. Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses and literally raised themselves up to his level, saying that they, too, have been called and are used by God (Numbers 12: 2). At least three things resulted from this practice, a discouraged leader, a divided leadership body, and divine retribution. Similarly, a

questionnaire was given after the sermon to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

The following results were obtained:

Question 1: Miriam and Aaron's sinned in that they sought to usurp Moses' authority by raising themselves up to his level of leadership (True or False).

- 80% - True
- 20% - False

Question 2: Miriam and Aaron were correct when they said that God used them as well as He uses Moses (True or False).

- 100% - True

Question 3: Anointing does give permission to work outside one's ministerial role (True or False).

- 80% - True
- 20% - False

Data Analysis

The objective of the teaching sessions or modules, the group interview, and the sermons were to lay down the foundation of eldership from a biblical, historical, and theological standpoint and to teach elders and potential elders the essentials of eldership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in order to ensure effective church eldership at Salem French SDA in Jacksonville, Florida. The following presents an analytical interpretation of the data collected and the results obtained from them. The data shows that prior to the intervention, that is the teaching sessions, only 10% of the sample population knew that elders in ancient Israel were not primarily religious figures, but people with social authorities who often were head of households, clans, or tribes who served as authority figures and made up the informal leadership of towns, cities, and

villages. They also played a religious role, but that role was played primarily in the household over which they had charge. After the intervention, 80% of the participants responded that the elders in Israel had both a religious and social purpose. That shows an increase of 70% in the sample's answering correctly the question.

Another important finding concerned the fundamental characteristic of a church elder. The data shows that 70% of the participants believed that an elder must be an older person who has been in the church for at least ten (10) years. This finding is helpful in that it brings to bear one of the fundamental problems the church faces, namely the exclusion of young adults to the eldership of the church and their subsequent flight to youth-friendly churches. Practices are generally extensions of beliefs. The fact that the leaders and potential leaders of the church believe that to become an elder one must be an older person (not a young adult) and must have been in the church for at least ten years impedes the progress of the church by denying a group the privilege to exercise their spiritual gifts. After the intervention, buttressed by a biblical case for young elders, namely Timothy, 90% of the sample population believe that any person, young and/or old can become an elder provided that the person receives the call and is not a new convert as scriptures counsel.

The data also show an increase in the participants' understanding of the biblical foundation of eldership and its application in the Seventh-day Adventist Church context. There is an increase of 30% in the sample's understanding of the eldership model in the New Testament and its application to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Prior to the intervention, 50% of the participants responded that the model of eldership in the SDA church is more like the model in the New Testament Church. After the intervention, 80%

of the participants responded that the model of eldership in the SDA Church is more like the model in the New Testament Church.

Another important finding concerns their understanding of the role church elders play in the leadership of the early church. Many people expressed in this training session they believed that the way church operates and function is the way it has been in the primitive church, namely elders were always subservient to pastors. The data shows that 60% of the participants responded that the church always had a pastor leading it. This perception had often been the underlying cause of ineffective eldership in that elders tend to believe that it is the Pastor's job to do the bulk of the work since he receives a salary from the church or a conference. After the intervention, 90% of the participants responded that elders worked together and had equal weight in church leadership, thus understanding that pastors and elders are to work jointly to shepherd the flock.

Sixty percent (60%) of the research participants believed that organization is important to maintain order in the church prior to the teaching intervention. This number slightly increases from sixty percent (60%) to eighty percent (80%). The reason for the slight increase (as evidenced by vivid discussion during the session) reflects deep-seated feelings against following the proper channels of decision-making in the church, which involves calling an elder meeting to discuss a matter, then taking the issue to the church board for further discussion and subsequent vote. The majority of participants appear to understand that organization is vitally important to maintain order in the church.

Congregational split in Seventh-day Adventist church usually occur over two major things. These include sending remittance to the conference and resistance to a pastor's vision. It is unrealistic to expect in any sizable group of people (20 or more) that

every body will believe the same things about anything. Yet, it is expected that church elders show maturity by keeping to themselves points of contention they have or may have regarding the modus operandi of the church to avoid confusion and create division. Prior to the intervention, only twenty percent (20%) of participants responded that professional ethics requires an elder to keep to him or herself points of divergence he or she may have regarding the modus operandi of the church. After the intervention, the data shows an of two hundred and fifty percent of participants who are of the opinion that though an elder is entitled to his or her opinion, it is important that these views are not taught or share with the membership to keep the unity of the church body.

Another important finding, which had been the hope of this project, was to help local church elders understand their assistantship role alongside the pastor. Some local elders often raise themselves up to the level of the pastor and contend his or her authority whereas they should serve as the pastor's counselor and supporter even when they may not agree with his vision for the church. Fifty percent of the participants were in agreement with the aforementioned role of local church elders. After the teaching intervention, the percentage of elders who were in agreement with the role they play as the pastor's supporters and counselors increased by eighty percent, which is highly significant.

The pastor-elder distinction is functionally non-existent in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In other words, a local church elder (with permission from a pastor or a conference official) can do almost everything an ordained minister is allowed to do. In fact, there are congregations where a local elder serves as the pastor, especially in those places with limited resources in third world regions and parts of Africa. It is then vital for

local church elders to know that historically there was no pastor-local church elder distinction to motivate them to perform their tasks effectively. Prior to the teaching intervention, only forty percent (40%) of the participants responded that in the early church the terms bishop and elders were used to express that the bishop and elders were one and the same. After the intervention, 80% of the research participants responded that in the early church the terms bishop and elders were used to express that the bishop and elders were one and the same, which is an increase of one hundred percent (100%). The intervention was effective.

Visiting with church members is one of the most important responsibilities of the local church elder and the pastor. In fact, it is a significant marker determining whether or not one is perceived as a good elder or pastor or not. In one particular church, the membership demanded that the conference extends the stay of a pastor in his district because he visits with them. The need to visit with church members is appreciated even more when members are hospitalized and/or are sick. Prior to the teaching intervention 30% of participants responded that home visitation is still important, but not as important as hospital visitation. After the intervention, ninety percent of the participants were of the opinion that home visitation is still important, but not as important as hospital visitation. The finding is significant; therefore, the intervention was effective.

The analysis of the data gathered after each of the two sermons delivered yielded the following results. Over ninety percent (90%) of the information shared in the sermon was retained as evidenced in the correct answering of the post-sermon questionnaires. Ninety percent (90%) of participants responded that increased pastoral effectiveness and efficient use of human talents in the congregation are important benefits of shared

leadership. Similarly, ninety percent of participants responded that delegation assuages the burden of pastoral leadership and one hundred percent (100%) responded correctly that the sermon was structure around three R's, namely, reaching, relieving, and refocusing.

The second sermon yielded positive results as well and seems to indicate that the intervention was effective. Ninety (90%) of research participants responded that Miriam and Aaron's sinned in that they sought to usurp Moses' authority by raising themselves up to his level of leadership. One hundred percent (100%) are of the opinion that Miriam and Aaron were correct when they said that God used them as well as He uses Moses, and eighty percent of the participants responded that anointing does not give anyone permission to work outside of their ministerial role. The results are consistent with the material presented in the sermon. The findings are significant and the intervention was effective.

The group interview was very fruitful and yielded important data on the participants understanding of good church elders and barriers to effective church eldership. The analysis helps surface three main issues to ensure effective church elders, namely: Care, Competence, and Commitment. Effective church eldership begins with a sense of caring. One is motivated inwardly to assist the membership as one would a sick person. In that capacity, the elder takes on the role of a spiritual nurse who seeks to assist the divine healer to help church members in their spiritual recovery and maintenance efforts. Barriers to functioning properly in the caring capacity involved wrong motivation, fatigue, a lack of competence, or just sheer carelessness.

Competence is also an important theme that emerged from the group interview. It involves know-how and know-what. To be effective elders have to know the scope of their work and how to perform the job. It is not enough to care, it is also important to be competent. In that capacity, the elder must acquaint him or herself with the Church Manual, which delineates the operation of the church. Knowledge of and practice of leadership principles, good interpersonal skills, knowledge of the Bible and the Seventh-day Adventist Church doctrines, and a personal, vibrant personal devotion and spirituality are the quintessential hallmark of the local church elder.

Commitment is another important theme that emerged from the data collected in the group interview. It involves dedication to do the work and setting the time to get it done. There was a unanimous response among participants that commitment was a major factor in ineffective church eldership. Most of the local church elders work, and some work at nighttime and sleep in the daytime, which robs them of the time they need to do the work. Balancing secular work and spiritual work and finding the time to do both can be taxing. Hence, it requires a level of commitment and discipline to do the job well.

The data is rich and it hides much important findings that may not be discussed in this doctoral project. Part of the reason is that the researcher was concerned primarily about issues in effective church leadership at Salem French SDA Church and barriers to ineffective church eldership. Data was interpreted and analyzed to determine whether the hypothesis was supported and the intervention effective. All three data collecting methods are convergent and support the effectiveness of the interventions.

Summary of Learning

This paragraph beings the last leg of the doctoral project journey and the sentiments are mixed. On the one hand, there is the joy of having stayed the course and completing the project; on the other hand, there are reminiscences of the challenges that had to be overcome, moments of impenetrable gloom that paved the way, and times of divine providence that come to mind. Amid the questions that flood the mind are: why researching this topic and not another? Was the effort spent and the money used to finance this educational journey worth it? In what ways will this degree and project enhance ministry?

The project and the writer at one point became one. In fact, they have always been one, except that it required the cathartic nature of this experience to show it. There is no doubt the ministerial context that housed and birthed this project benefited from it. Participants' testimonials are evidence of its effectiveness. But the project was somewhat mysteriously designed to unravel areas of ineffective leadership in this writer's practice that needed improvement. Yes, the project emerged out of a concern for effective local church elders at Salem. It also speaks volume of the need for effective pastoral leadership from this writer. If it is true that the task of a good pastor is to equip the saints for kingdom work and kingdom living, it must also be true that it is the responsibility of the pastor to ensure that elders are trained, equipped, and their work evaluated on a regular basis (at least every quarter) to ensure that the work is carried out effectively and that no member of the body of Christ suffer from pastoral neglect and malpractice.

The project emerged out of the need to have to have effective local church elders at Salem French SDA Church, in Jacksonville, Florida. Salem French SDA church is four

years old and enjoys great exposure due to its location on University Boulevard, which is a major street in Jacksonville. The congregation resulted from the union of three Haitian Seventh-day Adventist groups and has a membership of 245 people with an average attendance of 200 on Saturday Morning. Approximately fifteen percent of the church members are first generation Haitian-Americans, the membership being made primarily of Haitian immigrants. Salem French SDA has been unstable due to a lack of abled and trusted local leadership. The Coordinator for Haitian Ministries assumed the pastoral role and had been unable to provide consistent pastoral leadership owing to the scope of his responsibilities, which include the oversight of forty-seven churches from Jacksonville to Miami. The church now shares its pastor with another congregation. The problem is a need for abled and effective church elders. To remediate this problem, the objective is to create a training model for active and potential church elders at Salem SDA Church. The hypothesis is if church elders are trained, empowered, and work effectively, the church will function properly in the pastor's absence.

The recommended model for ensuring effective church eldership at Salem SDA church is the following:

1. Competence. Competence refers to the knowledge base required to be a church elder. It involves advanced knowledge of the Bible, the church manual, the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and leadership ability. It is not enough for someone to have the zeal and desire to do the work, but the person must be trained and prepared to take on the role of a local church elder. Also, aspiring elders must follow the path to local church eldership. The church makes a distinction between a church leader, also known as "conducteur d'église," and an elder. The former is not ordained and requires to go through a period of apprenticeship wherein the leader is trained to eventually assume the role of a local church elder.
2. Care. It takes special attributes to be a local church elder. A local church elder, like a pastor, is a soul caretaker. Just as people in the helping professions like social workers, psychologist, nurses, medical doctors and psychiatrists are

expected to bring to the patient an attitude of care, the same is required of the elder. While some people are born with it, others learn to develop it. A caring attitude would involve empathy, active listening, acceptance, approachability, and unconditional love.

3. **Commitment.** It is possible to have the two characteristics discussed above, but without commitment it is impossible to be an effective elder. Local church elders in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are called local pastors; the rationale for this nomenclature is they are or should be enabled and empowered to do almost everything a pastor does. Hence, it requires dedication and consecration. In some congregation, the role of local church elder is played by retired members and people who are available or render themselves available to do the work. Elders are expected to set aside a minimum of four to eight hours per week to do the work of the church.
4. **Co-evaluation.** Co-evaluation refers to a method of peer-assessment where each member of the board uses a questionnaire to do an objective evaluation of each other's work every quarter. The idea is to keep record of local elder's work and monitor their progress.

At the end of the project, a recommendation was made to the church board to add to the board of elders three of the research participants as church leaders. The idea is to ensure that the church continuously has people who are being trained to assume leadership role whenever the need arises. As a result, local church elders are encouraged to model effective eldership for the church leaders so that their learning process is supported by good models of eldership.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project was beneficial to the local and potential church elders, the congregation, and this writer. It provides this pastor yet another tool to ensure effective local church eldership. While other variables may not have been accounted for and elders' commitment and care are not easily determined at first, it is safe to conclude that competence coupled with a caring attitude and an unswerving commitment to the

work and the people of God will result in greater effectiveness in the work of local church elders. It is our hope that other congregation facing the same problem might be compelled to use this model to encourage church elders to be effective in their service for God and for God's church.

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